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# MEDITATIONS & READINGS

## FOR EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR

VOLUME III.—PART I.

PENTECOST :: CORPUS CHRISTI

ETC.

*Edited by Rev. J. B. Coyle, C.SS.R.*

VISITS TO THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT and TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, with Prayers for Mass, Preparation for Communion, Thanksgiving, etc, By ST. ALPHONSUS.

PRAYER. By ST. ALPHONSUS. Jubilee Edition.

OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL SUCCOUR AND IRELAND. (Áṙ Maiġ-ḋean Síoṙ-Ċaḃṙaċ iṙ Éiṙe). S. Ua C., D'aiṙ-tṙiġ.

# Meditations and Readings

FOR

## EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR

Selected from the Spiritual Writings of

SAINT ALPHONSUS

*Doctor of the Church and Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.*

VOLUME THREE
PART I.

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*FOREWORD*
BY
THE ARCHBISHOP OF TUAM

---

Edited by

JOHN BAPT. COYLE, C.SS.R.

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# FOREWORD

As a boy I read with great profit the popular spiritual works of St. Alphonsus Liguori. I am delighted to know that Fr. Coyle is having them republished in an enlarged edition and in the new form of "Meditations and Readings for Every Day of the Year."

I do not know of any religious books at once so sane, so spiritual and so adapted to the intelligence of the ordinary reader. They go straight to the root of normal spirituality. They are commonsense founded on the Truths of Faith. Such books were never so much needed as at the present day. We are living in an age of secularism. Never before did life offer so many attractions to divert the mind from the consideration of the Eternal Truths. Never before was there such an output of purely secular books, magazines, and newspapers, so smoothly written and so beautifully illustrated that the temptation to read them is universal and almost irresistible. Some of them are mere covers for sensuality, and others are hostile to the Faith, and all have a despiritualising influence on the mind. To counteract the resulting influence we want a corresponding output of wholesome Catholic literature, including books that advertise the attractions of the spiritual life. We want books that will bring home to our youth that there is no

happiness comparable to the humble joy of the good Christian. We want books that will, with flashes from the Beyond, dissipate the spell that the prospect of sensual pleasure casts over the imagination of youth. We want books, too, that will terrorise the hardened sinner and confirm the struggling aspirant to the higher life in the grim determination to walk in the narrow way. Now such are the ascetic works of St. Liguori that Father Coyle is engaged in having re-published. From my heart I wish him success in this apostolic mission. From my heart I pray that these volumes may have a wide circulation.

It is recognised that St. Liguori was one of the greatest missioners of all time. He was himself a great preacher of the Gospel. He founded the Congregation of the Redemptorists who have been in the thick of the fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil for well-nigh two hundred years, and who are only growing more vigorous with time. The Saint was a classical writer of Moral Theology. And while his Moral Theology holds the scales evenly between laxity and rigorism, his spiritual writings hold the scales between sentimental piety and cold ascetical teaching, with a like evenness, which attracts and converts the sinner, encourages the weak, and confirms the strong.

T. P. GILMARTIN,
*Archbishop of Tuam.*

St. Jarlath's,
28*th April*, 1928.

## *LETTER FROM HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL LOGUE TO THE EDITOR.*

ARA COELI,
ARMAGH,
*16th March, 1924.*

MY DEAR FATHER COYLE,

I have put off writing to thank you for your interesting and edifying volume, *Meditations and Readings for Every Day of the Year*, till I should find time to look through it. I have done so now, and I can congratulate you on undertaking a very useful work; and I hope you will be spared till you complete it.

The Ascetic Works of St. Alphonsus have done wonders in conveying solid instruction, nourishing piety, and exciting fervour among the people in every state and stage of life. They have been an ever enduring source of piety, especially in inspiring love of our Holy Redeemer and tender devotion to His Blessed Mother. It is a question whether his great Theological Works have contributed more to the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

Hence it was not without regret I noticed that these Spiritual Works were not so common among the people as they were in my early days. They seemed to be giving place to more showy and more superficial modern works which are far from breathing the fervent spirit of the great Doctor and Saint. One of the chief fruits which I expect from the work you have undertaken is the redress of this serious spiritual loss.

You have commenced well, and I trust you will be

able to continue till the Spiritual Works of St. Alphonsus are again as extensively circulated among the people as they were in the past. The scheme you have sketched out for yourself will familiarize the people with the beauty and fervour of St. Alphonsus' Works, and from using your volumes for casual reading they will be likely to drink more deeply of the source of fervour the Saint has opened up to them.

Wishing you every blessing and success in your useful work,

I am,

Dear Father Coyle,

Yours gratefully,

✠ MICHAEL CARDINAL LOGUE.

---

*HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL O'DONNELL wrote:*

It is a pleasure to me to subscribe my name to the beautiful letter written by my lamented predecessor, his Eminence Cardinal Logue, to commend Father Coyle's publications from the Spiritual Works of St. Alphonsus Liguori.

✠ PATRICK CARDINAL O'DONNELL,
*Archbishop of Armagh.*

*Armagh, 20th February,* 1926.

## *LETTER OF APPROBATION AND BLESSING FROM MOST REV. PATRICK MURRAY, C.SS.R.,*

*Superior-General and Rector Major.*

J.M.J.A.T. SANT' ALFONSO—VIA MERULANA,
ROMA,
*23rd October*, 1923.

MY DEAR FATHER COYLE,

I am very glad to hear that you have the first part of your "Meditations and Readings for every Day of the Year from the Writings of St. Alphonsus" ready for publication, and I wish this and the succeeding Volumes every success. It is difficult to exaggerate the value of these "Meditations and Readings" as is seen from the following statements of two Popes :

His Holiness Pope Pius IX, in speaking of the writings of St. Alphonsus, wrote : "The works of this most holy and learned man, written with extraordinary tender piety and devotion, breathe in every page a great love for Jesus Christ and great confidence in His mercy and merits. They also inspire their readers with the most ardent devotion to the Virgin Mother of God and to the Saints, and they inflame the hearts of men with the desire of receiving the Sacraments, as well as furnish a most abundant supply of excellent admonitions, counsels and directions to those who labour for the salvation of souls."

Pope Benedict XV also wrote recently, on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Doctorate of St. Alphonsus, that the excellence and utility of his teaching are becoming every day more apparent, and that his writings are helpful, not only to Theologians and Professors of the

Sacred Sciences, but also to the faithful of every condition of life, to whom he points out the way to solid virtue, and smoothes for them the way to the highest Christian perfection. His Holiness adds that the Saint's one great ambition in all his writings was to make known to all men the infinite amiability of Jesus Christ.

It is unnecessary for me to add anything to these words of two Popes. I wish only to say that this infinite amiability of Jesus Christ is particularly well shown in the present volume, for, in addition to the Meditations and Readings on the Religious State and on other subjects, there are given about forty Meditations on the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, in which are contained some of the most beautiful and devotional pages written by the Saint. Moreover the division of the ascetic writings of the Saint into two Meditations and a Spiritual Reading for every day of the year, and this arranged in such a way as not to interrupt the sequence of any work of the Saint, will please many, both in the Cloister and in the world, who desire to know and follow in their spiritual life the teachings of this great Doctor of the Church and Director of Souls.

In conclusion, in the name of St. Alphonsus I bless you and these Meditations and Readings with the hope that they may be everywhere known and read and well thought on, so that all may know the infinite amiability and mercy of Jesus Christ and the unspeakable amiability and mercy of His Blessed Mother, and that they may thus seek and love and serve Them alone.

Your devoted servant and confrère,

PATRICK MURRAY, C.SS.R.,
*Sup. Gen. and Rector Major.*

Rev. J. B. Coyle, C.SS.R.,
St. Joseph's,
Dundalk.

# THE EDITOR'S FOREWORD

This first Part of Volume III. of Meditations and Readings from St. Alphonsus, extends from the Ascension to the Fifth Sunday after Pentecost, and consequently embraces the Ecclesiastical Season most closely associated with the celebration of Feasts and devout exercises in honour of Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Eucharist. For this reason, therefore, as well as for the joy and comfort of all who use these Spiritual Writings of St. Alphonsus, we have aimed at making this, as far as possible, a *Blessed Sacrament Volume*. The Meditations and Readings on Jesus, our Eucharistic King, and on the love of His Sacred Heart, are the tenderest and sweetest things St. Alphonsus ever wrote.

We have thought it well to give as Readings *Coram Sanctissimo* for the greater part of these weeks, St. Alphonsus' well-known *Visits to the Most Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin Mary*. These Readings can, of course, be made at home, but, better still, as the title of these Readings inplies, *Coram Sanctissimo*, before the Most Blessed Sacrament in some church or oratory. In this way we hope that those who use these volumes may be induced to make more frequent Visits to Jesus in the Tabernacles of our Churches, where the beautiful affections and prayers of St. Alphonsus will open up to all the Divine fountain of graces in the Sacred Heart of our Eucharistic King and

God. " You will find," the Saint writes, " that all the Saints were enamoured of this most sweet devotion; and, indeed, it is not possible to find on earth a more precious gem, or a treasure more worthy of all our love, than Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament . . . Do not, then, O devout soul, refuse to begin this devotion. Leave the conversation of men, and from this time forward spend each day half, or, at least, a quarter of an hour in some church in the presence of Jesus Christ under the Sacramental species. *Taste and see how sweet is the Lord!* . . Oh, how sweet a joy it is to remain with Faith and tender devotion before the altar, and converse familiarly with Jesus Christ, Who is there for the express purpose of listening to, and graciously hearing those who pray to Him! . . . But why say more? *Taste and see!*"

In accordance with St. Alphonsus' own spirit, which is also that of the Church, we have with the Visit to the Most Blessed Sacrament given the Visit and Prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary. " Be careful," says the Saint, " always to join to your daily Visit to the Most Blessed Sacrament a Visit to the most holy Virgin Mary in the same church, or before a devout image of her in your own home . . . The great Queen says : *With me are riches . . . that I may enrich them that love me.*"

—The Editor.

Clonard Monastery, Belfast,
*Feast of St. Patrick, March 17, 1928.*

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## Friday after Ascension

### Morning Meditation

### *DIVINE LOVE IS A FIRE THAT INFLAMES THE HEART.*

"*Tui amoris in eis ignem accende.*"

We know from our Faith that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son through their mutual love for each other, and therefore that the gift of love which the Lord infuses into our souls, and which is the greatest of all gifts, is particularly attributed to the Holy Ghost. *The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us*—(Rom. v. 5). Hence in this Novena we should especially consider the great excellence and value of Divine love that we may desire it, and labour to obtain it by devout exercises, but particularly by fervent prayer, for Jesus has said : *Your Father from heaven will give the good Spirit to them that ask him*—(Luke xi. 13).

I.

God ordained in the Old Law that fire should be kept continually burning upon His altar : *The fire on the altar shall always burn*—(Lev. vi. 12). St. Gregory says that

our hearts are the altars of God on which He desires that the fire of His love should always be burning. And hence the Eternal Father, not satisfied with having given us His Son Jesus Christ, to save us by His death, would also give us the Holy Ghost, to dwell in our hearts, and keep them continually inflamed with His love. And Jesus Himself declared that it was in order to influence our hearts with this holy love that He came into the world, and that He desired nothing more than to see it kindled : *I am come to send fire upon the earth; and what will I but that it be kindled?*—(Luke xii. 49). Hence, forgetting the injuries and ingratitude He received from men in this world, when He had ascended into Heaven, He sent down upon us the Holy Ghost. O most loving Redeemer, dost Thou, then, love us not only in Thy sufferings and ignominies, but also in Thy Heavenly glory?

Hitherto, O my God, I have done nothing for Thee Who hast done such great things for me! Alas, my lukewarmness may deserve that Thou shouldst vomit me out of Thy mouth! O Holy Spirit, *warm what is cold*, deliver me from my tepidity, and enkindle within me a great desire of pleasing Thee.

II.

Hence it was that the Holy Ghost chose to appear in the form of fiery tongues. *And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire*—(Acts ii. 3). Wherefore the Church instructs us to pray : " May the Holy Ghost, we beseech Thee, O Lord, inflame us with that fire which our Lord Jesus came to cast upon the earth, and which He ardently desired to be enkindled." This was the holy Fire which has inspired the Saints to do such great things for God, to love their enemies, to desire contempt, to renounce all worldly goods, and to embrace with cheerfulness, even torments and death. Love cannot remain idle, and never says : *It is enough.* The soul that loves God, the more she does for her Beloved, the more she desires to do for Him, in order to please Him, and to

draw down His love the more. This holy love is enkindled in mental prayer : *In my meditation a fire shall flame out*—(Ps. xxxviii. 4). If, therefore, we desire to be on fire with the love of God, we must delight in prayer; this is the blessed furnace in which this Divine ardour is enkindled.

O Lord, I now renounce all self-gratification, and would rather die than displease Thee. Thou didst appear in the shape of fiery tongues : I consecrate my tongue to Thee, that I may never use it to offend Thee. Thou gave me my tongue, O God, to praise Thee, and I have made use of it to offend Thee, and to draw others into offences against Thee ! I am sorry for these things with my whole soul. Oh, for the love of Jesus Christ, Who in His mortal life honoured Thee so much with His tongue, grant that I also from this day forward may honour Thee, by always proclaiming Thy praises, by frequently invoking Thy assistance, and by speaking of Thy goodness and of the infinite love which Thou deservest ! I love Thee, my sovereign Good; I love Thee, O God of love ! O Mary, most dear spouse of the Holy Ghost, obtain for me this holy fire.

## Spiritual Reading

### *THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.*

*For every high-priest taken from among men is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins*—(Heb. v. 1). The priest, then, is placed by God in the Church in order to offer sacrifice. This office is peculiar to the priests of the Law of grace, to whom has been given the power of offering the great Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of the

Son of God—a Sacrifice sublime and perfect in comparison with the ancient sacrifices, the entire perfection of which consisted in being the shadow and figure of our Sacrifice. They were sacrifices of calves and oxen, but the Sacrifice of the Mass is the Sacrifice of the eternal Word made Man. Of themselves they had no efficacy, and were therefore called by St. Paul *weak and needy elements*—(Gal. iv. 9). But the Mass has power to obtain the remission of temporal penalties due to sins, and to procure an increase of grace, and more abundant helps for those in whose behalf it is offered.

Jesus Christ performed no action on earth greater than the celebration of Mass. In a word, of all actions that can be performed, the Mass is the most holy and dear to God, as well on account of the oblation presented to God, that is, Jesus Christ, a Victim of infinite dignity, as on account of the first Offerer, Jesus Christ, Who offers Himself on the altar by the hands of the priest. "The same now making the offering," says the Council of Trent, "by the ministry of priests, Who then offered Himself on the Cross." St. John Chrysostom said: "When you see a priest offering, do not believe that this is done by the hand of a priest; the offering is made rather by the hand of God invisibly stretched out."

All the honours that the Angels by their homage, and men by their virtues, penances, and martyrdoms, and other holy work, have ever given to God, could not give Him as much glory as a single Mass. For all the honours of creatures are finite honours, but the honour given to God in the Sacrifice of the altar, because it proceeds from a Divine Person, is an infinite honour. Hence we must confess that of all actions the Mass, as the Council of Trent says, is the most holy and divine: "We must needs confess that no other work can be performed by the faithful so holy and divine as this tremendous Mystery itself." It is, then, as we have seen, an action the most holy and dear to God—an action that appeases most efficaciously the anger of God against sinners, that beats down most effectually the powers of hell, that brings to men on

earth the greatest benefits, and that affords to the souls in Purgatory the greatest relief. It is, in fine, an action in which, as St. Udo, Abbot of Cluny, has written, consists the entire salvation of the world: "Of all the favours granted to me, this is the greatest: it is truly by the most generous ardour of His love that God instituted this mystery, without which there would be no salvation in this world." And, speaking of the Mass, Timothy of Jerusalem said that by it the world is preserved. But for the Mass the earth should have long since perished on account of the sins of men.

## Evening Meditation

### THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.

"*Charity dealeth not perversely.*"

#### II.—HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST AVOIDS LUKEWARMNESS, AND SEEKS PERFECTION.

I.

St. Gregory, in his explanation of these words, "dealeth not perversely," says that Charity, giving herself up more and more to the love of God, ignores whatever is not right and holy. The Apostle had already written to the same effect, when he called Charity a bond that unites the most perfect virtues together in the soul. *Have charity, which is the bond of perfection*—(Col. iii. 14). And whereas Charity delights in perfection, she consequently abhors that lukewarmness with which some persons serve God, to the great risk of losing charity, divine grace, their very souls and their all.

At the same time it must be observed that there are two kinds of tepidity or lukewarmness; the one unavoid-

able, the other avoidable. From that which is unavoidable, the Saints themselves are not exempt; and this comprises all the failings which are committed by us without full consent, but merely from our natural frailty. Such are, for example, distractions at prayers, interior disquietudes, useless words, vain curiosity, the wish to appear, tastes in eating and drinking, the movements of concupiscence not instantly repressed, and such like. We ought to avoid these defects as much as we possibly can; but, owing to the weakness of our nature, caused by the infection of sin, it is impossible to avoid them altogether. We ought, indeed, to detest them after committing them, because they are displeasing to God; but as we have already remarked, we ought to beware of making them a subject of alarm or disquietude. St. Francis of Sales wrote as follows: "All such thoughts as create disquietude are not from God, Who is the Prince of Peace; but they proceed always from the devil, or from self-love, or from the good opinion we have of ourselves."

II.

Such thoughts, therefore, as disturb us, must be straightway rejected, and made no account of. It was said also by the same Saint Francis regarding indeliberate faults, that, as they were involuntarily committed, so are they cancelled involuntarily. An act of sorrow, an act of love, is sufficient to cancel them. The venerable Sister Mary Crucified, a Benedictine nun, saw once a globe of fire, on which a number of straws were cast, and were all forthwith reduced to ashes. She was given to understand by this figure, that one act of Divine love, made with fervour, destroys all the defects we may have in our soul. The same effect is produced by the Holy Communion, according to what we find in the Council of Trent, where the Eucharist is called "an antidote by which we are freed from daily faults." Thus the like faults, though they are indeed faults, do not hinder perfection; that is,

our advancing to perfection; because no one attains erfection before he arrives at the kingdom of the Blessed.

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# Saturday after Ascension

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## Morning Meditation

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### *DIVINE LOVE IS A LIGHT THAT ENLIGHTENS THE SOUL.*

### "*O Lux Beatissima.*"

*O Lux beatissima!* The Holy Ghost, who is called most blessed Light, is He Who not only inflames our hearts to love Him, but also dispels all darkness and reveals to us the vanity of earthly things. O Holy Spirit, visit me by Thy grace, and grant me the gift of understanding, that by the contemplation of Heavenly things I may detach my thoughts and affections from all the vanities of this miserable world.

#### I.

One of the worst effects of Adam's sin in us, was its blinding our reason by means of the passions which darkened the mind. Oh, how miserable is the soul that allows itself to be ruled by any of the passions! Passion is a vapour, a veil, which will not suffer us to see the

truth. How can he fly from evil who knows not what is evil? This obscurity increases in proportion as our sins increase. But the Holy Ghost, Who is called *Light most blessed*, with His Divine rays, not only inflames our hearts to love Him, but also dispels our darkness, and reveals to us the vanity of all worldly things, the worth of eternal goods, the importance of salvation, the value of grace, the goodness of God, the infinite love He deserves from us, and the immense love He has shown to us.

O Holy Spirit, Divine Consoler, I adore Thee as my true God, as I adore God the Father and God the Son. I beseech Thee to visit me by Thy grace and Thy love, and to grant me the gift of understanding in order that I may be able to understand the Divine Mysteries, and, by the contemplation of Heavenly things, may detach my thoughts and affections from all the vanities of this miserable world.

II.

*The sensual man perceiveth not those things that are of the spirit of God*—(1 Cor. ii. 14). Man, absorbed in the pleasures of the earth, knows but little of these truths, and hence he unhappily loves that which he should hate, and hates that which he should love. St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi exclaimed: "O love not known, O love not loved!" And hence St. Teresa said, that God is not loved because He is not known. Wherefore the Saints ever sought light from God: *Send forth thy light; illumine my darkness; open thou my eyes.* Yes, because without light, precipices cannot be avoided, nor God be found.

O Holy and Divine Spirit, I believe that Thou art truly God, and one God with the Father and with the Son. I adore and acknowledge Thee as the Giver of those lights by which Thou hast discovered to me the evil I have done by offending Thee, and the obligation I am under of loving Thee. I thank Thee for them, and am exceedingly sorry for having offended Thee. I have deserved to be

abandoned by Thee in my darkness, but I am sensible Thou hast not yet abandoned me. Continue, O Eternal Spirit, to enlighten me, and make me know still more and more Thy infinite goodness, and give me strength to love Thee for the future with my whole heart. Add grace upon grace, that so I may be sweetly overcome, and constrained to love no other but Thee. I thank Thee through the merits of Jesus Christ. I love Thee, my sovereign Good; I love Thee more than myself. I desire to be all Thine; accept of me, and suffer me not to depart from Thee any more. O Mary, my Mother, assist me always by thy holy intercession.

## Spiritual Reading

### *THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.*

St. Bonaventure says that in each Mass God bestows on the world a benefit not inferior to that which He conferred by His Incarnation. This is conformable to the celebrated words of St. Augustine: "O venerable dignity of the priests, in whose hands, as in the womb of the Virgin, the Son of God becomes incarnate!" Moreover, St. Thomas teaches that since the Sacrifice of the altar is nothing else than the application and renewal of the Sacrifice of the Cross, a single Mass brings to men the same benefits and salvation that were produced by the Sacrifice of the Cross. St. John Chrysostom says: "The celebration of a Mass has the same value as the death of Christ on the Cross." And of this we are still more assured by the holy Church in the Collect for the Sunday after Pentecost: "As many times as this commemorative Sacrifice is celebrated, so often is the work of our Redemption performed." The same Redeemer Who once offered Himself on the Cross is immolated on the altar by the ministry of His priests. "For the Victim is one

and the same," says the Council of Trent : " the same now offering by the ministry of priests, Who then offered Himself on the Cross, the manner alone of offering being different."

In a word, the Mass is, according to the prediction of the Prophet, " the good and the beautiful thing" of the Church : *For what is the good thing of him, and what is his beautiful thing, but the corn of the elect and wine springing forth virgins*—(Zach. ix. 17). In the Mass, Jesus Christ gives Himself to us by means of the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar, which is the end and object of all the other Sacraments, says the angelic Doctor. Justly, then, has St. Bonaventure called a Mass a compendium of all God's love and of all His benefits to men. Hence the devil has always sought to deprive the world of the Mass by means of the heretics, constituting them precursors of Antichrist, whose first efforts will be to abolish the holy Sacrifice of the altar, and, according to the Prophet Daniel, in punishment of the sins of men, his efforts shall be successful : *And strength was given him against the continual sacrifice on account of sins*—(Dan. viii. 12).

Most justly, then, does the holy Council of Trent require of priests to be most careful to celebrate Mass with the greatest possible devotion and purity of conscience : " It is sufficiently clear that all industry and diligence is to be applied to this end, that it (the Mystery) be performed with the greatest possible inward cleanness and purity of heart." And in the same place the Council justly remarks, that on priests who celebrate this great Sacrifice negligently, and without devotion, shall fall the malediction threatened by the Prophet Jeremias : *Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord negligently*—(Jer. xlviii. 10). A servant of God used to say that the life of a priest should be nothing else than preparation and thanksgiving for Mass.

## Evening Meditation

### *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

II.—HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST AVOIDS LUKEWARMNESS AND SEEKS PERFECTION.

I.

The tepidity, then, that does hinder perfection, is that tepidity which is avoidable when a person commits deliberate venial faults; because all these faults committed with open eyes can effectually be avoided by Divine grace if we have the desire. Wherefore St. Teresa said: "May God deliver you from deliberate sin, however small it may be." Such, for example, are wilful untruths, little detractions, imprecations, expressions of anger, derisions of one's neighbour, cutting words, words of self-esteem, animosities nourished in the heart, inordinate attachments to persons of a different sex. "These are a sort of worm," wrote the same Saint, "which is not detected before it has eaten into the virtues." Hence, in another place, she gave this admonition: "By means of small things the devil goes about making holes for great things to enter."

We should, therefore, tremble at such deliberate faults; since they cause God to close His hands from bestowing upon us His clearer lights and stronger helps, and deprive us of spiritual sweetnesses; and the result of such is to make the soul perform all spiritual exercises with great weariness and pain; and so, in the course of time, she begins to leave off Prayer, Communions, Visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and Novenas; and, in the end, she will probably leave off all piety, as has not infrequently been the case with many unhappy souls.

II.

This is the meaning of that threat which our Lord makes to the tepid : *Thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot; but because thou art lukewarm . . . I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth*— (Apoc. iii. 15, 16). How wonderful ! He says, *I would thou wert cold* ! What ! And is it better to be cold, that is, deprived of grace, than to be tepid ? Yes, in a certain sense it is better to be cold ; because a person who is cold may more easily change his life, being stung by the reproaches of conscience ; whereas a tepid person contracts the habit of slumbering on in his faults, without bestowing a thought, or taking any trouble to correct himself ; and thus he makes his cure, as it were, desperate : St. Gregory says, " Tepidity, which has cooled down from fervour, is a hopeless state." The Venerable Father Lewis da Ponte said that he had committed many defects in the course of his life ; but that he had never made a truce with his faults. Some there are who make friends with their faults, and from that springs their ruin ; especially when the fault is accompanied with some passionate attachment, of self-esteem, of ambition, of liking to be seen, of heaping up money, of resentment against a neighbour, or of inordinate affection for a person of a different sex. In such cases there is great danger of those threads, as it were, becoming chains, as St. Francis of Assisi said, which will drag down the soul to hell. At all events, such a soul will never become a saint, and will forfeit that beautiful crown, which God had prepared for her, had she faithfully corresponded to grace. The bird no sooner feels herself loosed from the snare, than she immediately flies ; the soul, as soon as she is loosed from earthly attachments, immediately flies to God ; but while she is bound, though it be but by the slightest thread, it is enough to prevent her flying to God. Oh, how many spiritual persons there are who do not become saints, because they will not do themselves the violence to break away from certain little attachments !

# Sunday Within the Octave of Ascension

## Morning Meditation

### *DIVINE LOVE A FOUNTAIN THAT SATISFIES.*

*" Riga quod est aridum."*

God, who loves us and desires to see us happy, cries out and makes known to all : *If any man thirst, let him come to me.* I will give him the Holy Ghost Who will make him blessed in this life and in the next. *Riga quod est aridum!* O my Jesus, I beseech Thee, give me the water of Thy love which will make me forget the earth, and live for Thee alone Who art the infinitely amiable One !

I.

Love is called a *living fountain, fire, Charity. Fons vivus, ignis, Charitas.* Our Blessed Redeemer said to the Samaritan woman : *But he that shall drink of the water that I shall give him, shall not thirst for ever* —(John iv. 13). Love is the water which satisfies our thirst; for he that truly loves God with his whole heart, neither seeks nor desires anything else : because in God he finds every good. Hence, happy in possessing God, he frequently exclaims with joy : *My God and my All!* Almighty God complains of many who seek for fleeting, miserable pleasures from creatures, and leave Him, Who is Infinite Goodness, and the Fountain of all joy : *They have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and have digged to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water*—(Jer. ii., 13). Meanwhile God, Who loves

us and desires to see us happy, cries out and makes known to all : *If any one thirst, let him come to me*—(John vii. 37). He who desires to be happy, let him come to Me, and I will bestow upon him the Holy Ghost, Who will make him blessed, both in this life and in the next.

*Domine, da mihi hanc aquam! Lord, give me of this water!*—(John iv. 15). O Jesus, with the Samaritan woman I beseech Thee, give me of this water of Thy love, which will make me forget the earth, and live only for Thee alone, Who art the infinitely amiable One. *Riga quod est aridum!* My soul is a barren soil, which produces nothing but the weeds and thorns of sin. Oh, water it with Thy holy grace, that it may yield some fruit to Thy glory, before it leaves this world in death !

II.

He, then, that believes in Jesus Christ, and loves Him, shall be enriched with so many graces, that from his heart shall spring up fountains of holy virtues, which shall not only preserve his life, but also give life to others. And indeed this water is the Holy Ghost, the sustaining love which Jesus Christ promised to send from Heaven, after His Ascension : *Now this he said of the Spirit, which they should receive who believed in him: for as yet the Spirit was not given, because Jesus was not glorified*—(John vii. 39).

The key which opens the channels of this blessed water is holy prayer, which obtains all good things in virtue of the promise : *Ask and you shall receive.* We are weak, and blind, and poor, and miserable, but prayer will obtain for us strength, and light, and wealth, and happiness. Theodoret says : " Prayer, though but one, can effect all things." He who prays receives all he asks for. God desires to give us His graces, but He desires that we should pray for them.

O Fountain of living water, O sovereign Good, how often have I deserted Thee for the defiled waters of the earth, which have deprived me of Thy love ! O that I

had rather died than offend Thee! But for the future I will seek after nothing but Thee, my God. Succour me, and make me always faithful to Thee. Mary, my hope, keep me always under thy holy protection.

## Spiritual Reading

### *THE SUBLIME DIGNITY OF THE PRIESTHOOD.*

In his Epistle to the Christians of Smyrna, St. Ignatius, Martyr, says that the priesthood is the most sublime of all created dignities: "The apex of dignities is the priesthood." St. Ephrem calls it an infinite dignity: "The priesthood is an astounding miracle, great, immense, and infinite." St. John Chrysostom says, that though its functions are performed on earth, the priesthood should be numbered among the things of Heaven. According to Cassian, the priest of God is exalted above all earthly sovereignties, and above all celestial heights —he is inferior only to God. Innocent III says that the priest is placed between God and man; inferior to God, but superior to man.

St. Denis calls the priest "a divine man." Hence he has called the priesthood "a divine dignity." In fine, St. Ephrem says that the gift of the sacerdotal dignity surpasses all understanding. For us it is enough to know, that Jesus Christ has said that we should treat His priests as we would His own person: *He that heareth you, heareth me; he that despiseth you, despiseth me*—(Luke x. 16). Hence St. John Chrysostom says, that "he who honours a priest, honours Christ, and he who insults a priest, insults Christ." Through respect for the sacerdotal dignity, St. Mary of Oignies used to kiss the ground on which a priest had walked.

The dignity of the priest is estimated by the exalted nature of his office. Priests are chosen by God to

manage on earth all His concerns and interests. "Divine," says St. Cyril of Alexandria, "are the offices confided to priests." St. Ambrose has called the priestly office "a divine profession." A priest is a minister destined by God to be a public ambassador of the whole Church, to honour Him, and to obtain His graces for all the faithful. The entire Church cannot give to God as much honour, nor obtain so many graces, as a single priest by celebrating a single Mass; for the greatest honour that the whole Church without priests could give to God would consist in offering to Him in sacrifice the lives of all men. But of what value are the lives of all men compared with the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which is a Sacrifice of infinite value? What are all men before God but a little dust? *As a drop of a bucket . . . as a little dust*—(Is. xl. 15, 17). They are but a mere nothing in His sight. *All nations are before him as if they had no being at all.* Thus, by the celebration of a single Mass, in which he offers Jesus Christ in Sacrifice, a priest gives greater honour to the Lord, than if all men by dying for God offered to Him the sacrifice of their lives. By a single Mass he gives greater honour to God than all the Angels and Saints, along with the Blessed Virgin Mary, have given or shall give to Him; for their worship cannot be of infinite value, like that which the priest celebrating on the altar offers to God.

Moreover, in the holy Mass the priest offers to God an adequate thanksgiving for all the graces bestowed even on the Blessed in Paradise; but such a thanksgiving all the Saints together are incapable of offering to God. Hence it is that on this account also the priestly dignity is superior even to all celestial dignities. Besides, the priest, says St. John Chrysostom, is an ambassador of the whole world, to intercede with God and to obtain graces for all creatures. The priest, according to St. Ephrem, "treats familiarly with God." To priests every door is open.

Jesus has died to institute the priesthood. It was not necessary for the Redeemer to die in order to save the

world; a drop of His Blood, a single tear, or prayer, was sufficient to procure salvation for all; for such a prayer, being of infinite value, would be sufficient to save not one but a thousand worlds. But to institute the priesthood, the Death of Jesus Christ has been necessary. Had He not died, where should we find the Victim that the priests of the New Law now offer? Where find a victim altogether holy and immaculate, capable of giving to God an honour worthy of God? As has been already said, all the lives of men and Angels are not capable of giving to God an infinite honour like that which a priest offers to Him by a single Mass.

## Evening Meditation

### *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

#### III.—HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST AVOIDS LUKEWARMNESS AND SEEKS PERFECTION.

I.

The evil of tepidity arises from the little love men have for Jesus Christ. They who are puffed-up with self-esteem; those who frequently take to heart occurrences that fall out contrary to their wishes; who practise great indulgence towards themselves on account of their health; who keep their heart open to external objects, and the mind always distracted, with an eagerness to listen to, and to know, so many things that have nothing to do with the service of God, but merely serve to gratify private curiosity; who are ready to resent every little inattention from others, and consequently are often troubled, and grow remiss in prayer and recollection who one moment are all devotion and joy, the next all impatience and melancholy, just as things happen according to or against their humour; all such persons do not love Jesus Christ,

or love Him very little, and cast discredit on true devotion.

But suppose anyone should find himself sunk in this unhappy state of tepidity, what has he to do? Certainly, it is a hard thing for a soul grown lukewarm to resume her ancient fervour; but our Lord has said, that what man cannot do, God can very well do. *The things that are impossible with man, are possible with God*—(Luke xviii. 27). Whoever prays and employs the means is sure to accomplish his desire.

Now, the first means is *the desire of perfection.* Pious desires are the wings which lift us up from earth; for, as St. Laurence Justinian says, desire "supplies strength, and lightens pain." It gives strength to walk towards perfection, and lightens the fatigue of the journey. He who has a real desire of perfection fails not to advance continually towards it; and so advancing, he must finally arrive at it. On the contrary, he who has not the desire of perfection will always go backwards, and always find himself more imperfect than before. St. Augustine says, that "not to go forward in the way of God is to go backwards." He that makes no effort to advance will find himself carried backwards by the current of his corrupt nature.

II.

They, then, who say, "God does not wish us all to be saints," make a great mistake. Yes; for St. Paul says, *This is the will of God, your sanctfication*—(1 Thess. iv. 3). God wishes us all to be saints, and each one according to his state of life: the Religious as a Religious; the secular as a secular; the Priest as a Priest; the married as married; the man of business as a man of business; the soldier as a soldier; and so of every other state of life. Most beautiful, indeed, are the instructions which my great patroness, St. Teresa, gives on this subject. She says, in one place, "Let us enlarge our thoughts; for hence we shall derive immense good."

Elsewhere : " We must beware of having poor desires; but rather put our confidence in God, in order that, by forcing ourselves continually onwards, we may by degrees arrive where, by the Divine grace, so many Saints have arrived." And in confirmation of this she quoted her own experience, having known how courageous souls make considerable progress in a short period of time. " Because," said she, " The Lord takes as much delight in our desires, as if they were put into execution." In another place she says : " Almighty God does not confer extraordinary favours, except where His love has been earnestly sought after." Again, in another passage, she remarks : " God does not fail to repay every good desire even in this life, for He is the Friend of generous souls, provided only they do not trust in themselves." This Saint herself was endowed with just such a spirit of generosity; so that she once even said to our Lord, that were she to behold others in Paradise enjoying Him more than herself, she would not care; but were she to behold any one loving Him more than she should love Him, this she declared she knew not how she could endure.

We must, therefore have great courage : *The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh him*—(Lam. iii. 25). God is surpassingly good and liberal towards a soul that heartily seeks Him. Neither can past sins prove a hindrance to our becoming Saints, if only we have the sincere desire to become so. St. Teresa remarks : " The devil strives to make us think it pride to entertain lofty desires, and to wish to imitate the Saints; but it is of great service to encourage ourselves with the desire of great things, because, although the soul has not all at once the necessary strength, yet she nevertheless makes a bold flight, and rapidly advances." The Apostle writes : *To them that love God, all things work together unto good*—(Rom. viii. 28). And the Gloss adds " even sins"; even past sins can contribute to our sanctification, inasmuch as the recollection of them keeps us more humble, and more grateful, when we witness the favours God bestows upon us, after all our outrages against Him. I

am not capable of anything, the sinner should say, nor do I deserve anything; I deserve nothing but hell; but I have to deal with a God of infinite bounty, Who has promised to listen to all that pray to Him. Now, as He has rescued me from a state of damnation, and wishes me to become holy, and now proffers me His help, I can certainly become a saint, not by my own strength, but by the grace of my God, Who strengthens me: *I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me*—(Phil. iv. 13). Once, thus, we have good desires, we must take courage, and trusting in God, endeavour to put them into execution; but if afterwards we encounter any obstacle in our spiritual enterprises, let us repose quietly on the will of God. God's will must be preferred before every good desire of our own. St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi would sooner have remained without perfection than possess it without the will of God.

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## Monday Within the Octave of Ascension

### Morning Meditation

### *DIVINE LOVE IS A DEW THAT FERTILIZES.*

"*In aestu temperies: dulce refrigerium.*"

Divine Love fertilizes the good desires, the holy purposes, and the good works of our souls, and these are the flowers and fruits which the grace of the Holy Ghost produces. O Holy and Divine Spirit, I will no longer live to myself. I will spend all the days that remain to me of life in loving and pleasing Thee.

I.

Divine Love is a dew that fertilizes the soul. Thus does the Holy Church teach us to pray : *May the infusion of the Holy Ghost cleanse our hearts, and fertilize them by the inward sprinkling of his dew.* Love fertilizes our good desires, our holy purposes, and the good works of our souls; these are the flowers and the fruits which the grace of the Holy Ghost produces. Love is also called dew, because it cools the heat of bad desires and temptations. Hence the Holy Ghost is also called *refreshment in the excess of heat, and solace in our grief. In aestu temperies; dulce refrigerium.*

O Holy and Divine Spirit, I will live no longer to myself; the days which may remain to me of life, I will spend entirely in loving and pleasing Thee. On this account I beseech Thee to grant me the gift of prayer. Come, Thou, into my heart, and teach me to pray as I ought. Give me strength not to neglect prayer in the time of dryness and weariness; and give me the spirit of prayer; that is, the grace of praying to Thee in such a manner, and of offering Thee such prayers as may be most acceptable to Thee.

II.

This dew descends into our hearts in the time of prayer. A quarter of an hour's prayer is sufficient to appease any passion of hatred or of inordinate love, however ardent it may be : *He brought me into the cellar of wine, he set in order charity in me*—(Cant. ii. 4). Holy meditation is this cellar of wine, where love is set in order, to love God above all things, and our neighbours as ourselves. He who loves God loves prayer; and he who loves not prayer will find it morally impossible to overcome his passions.

I was lost by my sins, O my God, but I now see from the favour which Thou hast shown me, that Thou desirest my sanctification and salvation; and I certainly desire to

become holy, that I may please Thee, and love more ardently Thy infinite Goodness. I love Thee, my sovereign Good, my Love, and my All; and because I love Thee, I give my whole self to Thee. O Blessed Virgin Mary, protect me.

## Spiritual Reading

### *GRANDEUR OF THE PRIESTLY POWER.*

The dignity of the priest is also estimated by the power that he has over the real and the mystic body of Jesus Christ.

With regard to the power of priests over the real Body of Jesus Christ, it is of Faith that when they pronounce the words of Consecration the Incarnate Word has obliged Himself to obey and to come into their hands under the sacramental species. We are struck with wonder when we hear that God obeyed the voice of Josue—*The Lord obeying the voice of man*—and made the sun stand when he said: *Move not, O sun, towards Gabaon, . . . and the sun stood still*—(Jos. x. 12-13). But our wonder should be far greater when we find that in obedience to the words of His priests—Hoc est Corpus Meum—God Himself descends on the altar, that He comes wherever they call Him, and as often as they call Him, and places Himself in their hands, even though they should be His enemies. And after having come, He remains entirely at their disposal; they move Him as they please, from one place to another; they may, if they wish, shut Him up in the Tabernacle, or expose Him on the altar, or carry Him outside the church. They may, if they choose, eat His flesh, and give Him as food to others. "Oh, how very great is their power," says St. Laurence Justinian, speaking of priests; "a word falls from their lips and the Body of Christ is there substantially formed from the

matter of bread, and the Incarnate Word come down from Heaven, is found really present on the table of the altar! Never did Divine goodness give such power to the Angels. The Angels abide by the order of God, but the priests take Him in their hands, distribute Him to the faithful, and partake of Him as food for themselves."

With regard to the *mystic* body of Christ, that is, all the faithful, the priest has the power of the keys, or the power of delivering sinners from hell, of making them worthy of Paradise, and of changing them from the slaves of Satan into the children of God. And God Himself is obliged to abide by the judgment of His priests, and either not to pardon or to pardon, according as they refuse or give absolution, provided the penitent is capable of it. "Such," says St. Maximus of Turin, "is this judiciary power ascribed to Peter that its decision carries with it the decision of God." The sentence of the priest precedes, and God subscribes to it, writes St. Peter Damian. Hence St. John Chrysostom thus concludes: "The Sovereign Master of the universe only follows the servant by confirming in Heaven all that the latter decides upon earth."

Priests are the dispensers of the divine graces, and the companions of God. "Consider the priests," says St. Ignatius, Martyr, "as the dispensers of divine graces and the associates of God." "They are," says St. Prosper, "the glory and the immovable columns of the Church; they are the doors of the eternal city, through them all reach Christ; they are the vigilant guardians to whom the Lord has confided the keys of the kingdom of Heaven; they are the stewards of the king's house, to assign to each according to his good pleasure his place in the hierarchy."

Were the Redeemer to descend into a church, and sit in a confessional to administer the Sacrament of Penance, and a priest to sit in another confessional, Jesus would say over each penitent, *Ego te absolvo*. The priest would likewise say over each of his penitents, *Ego te absolvo*, and the penitents of each would be equally

absolved. How great the honour that a king would confer on a subject whom he should empower to rescue from prison as many as he pleased! But far greater is the power that the Eternal Father has given to Jesus Christ, and that Jesus Christ has given to His priests, to rescue from hell not only the bodies but also the souls of the faithful: "The Son," says St. John Chrysostom, "has put into the hands of the priests all judgment; for having been as it were transported into Heaven, they have received this divine prerogative. If a king gave to a mortal the power to release from prison all prisoners, all would pronounce such a one happy; but the priests have received from God a far greater power, since the soul is more noble than the body."

## Evening Meditation

### *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

#### IV.—THE MEANS OF AVOIDING LUKEWARMNESS AND ATTAINING PERFECTION.

I.

The second means of perfection is *the resolution to belong wholly to God.* Many are called to perfection; they are urged on towards it by grace, they conceive a desire of it; but because they never really resolve to acquire it, they live and die in the ill-odour of their tepid and imperfect life. The desire of perfection is not enough if it be not followed up by a stern resolve to attain it. How many souls feed themselves on desires alone, but never make withal one step in the way of God! It is of such desires that the Wise Man speaks when he says: *Desires kill the slothful*—(Prov. xxi. 25). The slothful man is ever desiring, but never resolves to take the means suitable to his state of life to become a saint. He says:

" Oh, if I were but in solitude, and not in this house! Oh, if I could but go and reside in another monastery, I would give myself up entirely to God!" And meanwhile he cannot support a certain companion; he cannot put up with a word of contradiction; he is dissipated about many useless cares; he commits a thousand faults of gluttony, of curiosity, and of pride; and yet he sighs out to the wind : " Oh, if I had but . . . !" or " Oh, if I could but . . . !" Such desires do more harm than good; because some regale themselves upon them, and in the meantime go on leading a life of imperfection. It was a saying of St. Francis of Sales : " I do not approve of a person who, being engaged in some duty or vocation, sighs for some other kind of life than is compatible with his actual position, or for other exercises unfitted for his present state; for it merely serves to dissipate his heart, and makes him languish in his necessary duties."

II.

We, must, therefore, desire perfection, and resolutely take the means towards it. St. Teresa says : " God only looks for one resolution on our part, and will afterwards do all the rest Himself : the devil has no fear of irresolute souls." For this reason mental prayer must be used, in order to take the means which lead to perfection. Some make much prayer, but never come to a practical conclusion. The Saint again says : " I would rather have a short prayer, which produces great fruits, than a prayer of many years, wherein a soul never gets further than resolving to do something worthy of Almighty God." And elsewhere she says : " I have learnt by experience that whoever, at the beginning, brings himself to the resolution of doing some great work, however difficult it may be, if he does so to please God, he has no reason to be afraid."

# Tuesday Within the Octave of Ascension

## Morning Meditation

### *DIVINE LOVE IS A REPOSE THAT REFRESHES.*

*"In Labore Requies: in Fletu Solatium."*

Divine Love is called *rest in labour, in mourning comfort.* A soul that loves God finds peace and contentment in all tribulations and adversities, by merely saying: *This is the will of my God.*

I.

*Divine Love is also called rest in labour, in mourning comfort. In labore requies, in fletu solatium.* Love is a repose that refreshes, because the principal effect of love is to unite the will of the lover with that of the beloved. For a soul that loves God, in every affront it receives, in every grief it endures, in every loss it suffers, it is sufficient to make it resigned to know that such things are permitted to befall it by the will of its Beloved. It finds peace and contentment in all tribulations and adversities, saying: *Such is the will of my God.* This is that peace which surpasseth all the pleasures of sense: *The peace of God which surpasseth all understanding*—(Philipp. iv. 7). St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, by merely repeating: "it is the will of God," was immediately filled with joy.

O my God, how often, for the sake of following my own will, have I opposed Thy holy will and despised it. I grieve for this evil above every other evil. O Lord, I desire from this day forward to love Thee with my whole heart.

II.

Everyone in this world must carry his cross; but St. Teresa says that the cross is hard to those who drag it, but not to those who embrace it. Thus, the Lord knows well how to strike and how to heal. *He woundeth*, saith holy Job, *and cureth; he striketh, and his hands shall heal.* The Holy Ghost, by His sweet unction, renders even ignominies and torments sweet and amiable. *Yea, Father: for so hath it seemed good in thy sight* (Matt. xi. 26). Thus ought we to say in all the adversities which befall us: *So be it done, O Lord, for so hath it pleased Thee.* And when the fear of any temporal calamity alarms us, let us always say: "Do with me, O Lord, whatever Thou pleasest; I will accept all as coming from Thee." It is good, as St. Teresa advises, frequently in the course of the day to offer ourselves in this manner to God.

*Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.* What wouldst Thou have me to do? I will do all that Thou requirest of me. Thy will shall be my only desire, my only love. Holy Spirit, strengthen my weakness. Thou art goodness itself: how can I love any other but Thee? O do Thou draw all the affections of my heart to Thyself, by the sweet attractions of Thy holy love. I renounce all, to give myself entirely to Thee. Accept of me, and succour me. O Mary, my Mother, pray for me.

## Spiritual Reading

### *THE PRIESTHOOD SURPASSES ALL OTHER CREATED DIGNITIES.*

The sacerdotal dignity is the most noble of all the dignities in this world. "Nothing," says St. Ambrose, "is more excellent in this world." It transcends, says

St. Bernard, " all the dignities of kings, of emperors, and of Angels." According to St. Ambrose, the dignity of the priest as far exceeds that of kings, as the value of gold surpasses that of lead. The reason is, because the power of kings extends only to temporal goods and to the bodies of men, but the power of the priest extends to spiritual goods and to the human soul. " Hence," says St. Clement, " as much as the soul is more noble than the body, so much is the priesthood more excellent than royalty." " Princes," says St. John Chrysostom, "have the power of binding, but they bind only the bodies, while the priest binds the soul."

The kings of the earth glory in honouring priests : " It is a mark of a good prince," says Pope St. Marcellinus, " to honour the priests of God." " They willingly," says Peter de Blois, " bend their knee before the priest of God; they kiss his hands, and with bowed down head receive his benediction." " The sacerdotal dignity," says St. Chrysostom, " effaces the royal dignity; hence the king inclines his head under the hand of the priest to receive his blessing." In the Council of Nice, the Emperor Constantine wished to sit in the last place, after all the priests, and on a seat lower than that which they occupied; he would not even sit down without their permission. The holy king, St. Boleslaus, had so great a veneration for priests, that he would not dare to sit in their presence.

The sacerdotal dignity also surpasses the dignity of the Angels. The Angels in Heaven cannot absolve from a single sin. The Guardian Angels procure for the souls committed to their care grace to have recourse to a priest that he may absolve them : " Although," says St. Peter Damian, " Angels may be present, they yet wait for the priest to exercise his power, but no one of them has the power of the keys—that is, to bind and to loose." When St. Michael comes to a dying Christian who invokes his aid, the holy Archangel can chase away the devils, but he cannot free his client from their chains till a priest comes to absolve him. After having given the order of priest-

hood to a holy ecclesiastic, St. Francis de Sales perceived, that in going out he stopped at the door as if to give precedence to another. Being asked by the Saint why he stopped, he answered that God favoured him with the visible presence of his Angel guardian, who before he had received priesthood always remained at his right and preceded him, but afterwards walked on his left and refused to go before him. It was in a holy contest with the Angel that he stopped at the door. St. Francis of Assisi used to say, "If I saw an Angel and a priest, I would bend my knee first to the priest and then to the Angel."

Besides, the power of the priest surpasses that of the Blessed Virgin Mary; for, although this Divine Mother can pray for us, and by her prayers obtain whatever she wishes, yet she cannot absolve a Christian from even the smallest sin. "The Blessed Virgin was eminently more perfect than the Apostles," says Innocent III: "It was, however, not to her, but only to the Apostles, that the Lord entrusted the keys of the kingdom of Heaven." St. Bernardine of Sienna has written: "Holy Virgin, excuse me, for I speak not against thee: the Lord has raised the priesthood above thee." The Saint assigns the reason of the superiority of the priesthood over Mary; she conceived Jesus Christ only once; but by consecrating the Eucharist, the priest, as it were, conceives Him as often as he wishes, so that if the Person of the Redeemer had not as yet been in the world, the priest, by pronouncing the words of Consecration, would produce this great Person of a Man-God. "O wonderful dignity of priests," cries out St. Augustine, "in whose hands, as in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, the Son of God becomes incarnate." Hence priests are called the parents of Jesus Christ: such is the title that St. Bernard gives them, for they are the active cause by which He is made to exist really in the consecrated Host.

Thus the priest may, in a certain manner, be called the creator of his Creator, since by saying the words of Consecration, he creates, as it were, Jesus in the Sacrament, by giving Him a sacramental existence, and

produces Him as a Victim to be offered to the Eternal Father. As in creating the world it was sufficient for God to have said : Let it be made, and it was created—*He spoke, and they were made*—(Ps. xxxii. 9)—so it is sufficient for the priest to say, " Hoc est corpus meum," and behold the bread is no longer *bread*, but the Body of Jesus Christ. " The power of the priest," says St. Bernardine of Sienna, " is the power of the Divine Person; for the Transubstantiation of the bread requires as much power as the creation of the world." And St. Augustine has written : " O venerable sanctity of the hands ! O happy function of the priest ! He that created me (if I may say so) gave me the power to create Him; and He that created me without me is Himself created by me !" As the Word of God created Heaven and earth, so, says St. Jerome, the words of the priest create Jesus Christ. " At a sign from God there came forth from nothing both the sublime vault of the heavens and the vast extent of the earth; but not less great is the power that manifests itself in the mysterious words of the priest." The dignity of the priest is so great, that he even blesses Jesus Christ on the altar as a Victim to be offered to the Eternal Father. In the sacrifice of the Mass, writes Father Mansi, Jesus Christ is the principal Offerer and Victim; as Minister, He blesses the priest, but as Victim, the priest blesses Him.

## Evening Meditation

### *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

#### V.—THE MEANS OF AVOIDING LUKEWARMNESS AND ATTAINING PERFECTION.

I.

The first resolution must be to make every effort, and to die rather than commit any deliberate sin whatever,

however small it may be. It is true that all our endeavours, without the Divine assistance, cannot enable us to vanquish temptations; but God wishes us on our part frequently to use this violence with ourselves, because then He will afterwards supply us with His grace, will succour our weakness, and enable us to gain the victory. This resolution removes from us every obstacle to our going forward, and at the same time gives us great courage, because it affords us an assurance of being in the grace of God. St. Francis of Sales writes: "The best security we can possess in this world of being in the grace of God, consists not indeed in feeling that we have His love, but in a pure and irrevocable abandonment of our entire being into His hands, and in the firm resolution of never consenting to sin, either great or small." This is what is meant by being of a delicate conscience. Be it observed that it is one thing to be of a delicate conscience, and another to be of a scrupulous conscience. To be of a delicate conscience is requisite to become a saint; but to be scrupulous is a defect, and does harm; and on this account we must obey our directors, and rise above scruples, which are nothing else but vain and unreasonable alarms.

II.

Hence it is necessary to resolve on choosing the best; not only what is agreeable to God, but what is most agreeable to Him, without any reserve. St. Francis of Sales says: "We must start with a strong and constant resolution to give ourselves wholly to God, and protest to Him that for the future we wish to be His without any reserve, and then we must afterwards often renew this same resolution." St. Andrew Avellini made a vow to advance daily in perfection. It is not necessary for every one who wishes to become a saint to make it the matter of a vow; but he must endeavour every day to make some steps forward in perfection. St. Laurence Justinian has written: "When a person is really making progress, he

feels in himself a continual desire of advancing; and the more he improves in perfection, the more this desire increases; because as his interior light increases each day more and more, he seems to himself always to be wanting in every virtue, and to be doing no good at all; and if, perchance, he is aware of some good he does, it always appears to him very imperfect, and he makes small account of it. The consequence is, he is continually labouring to acquire perfection without ever feeling wearied."

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# Wednesday Within the Octave of Ascension

## Morning Meditation

### *DIVINE LOVE STRENGTHENS US.*

"*Fortis est ut mors delectio.*"

*Love is strong as death*—(Cant. viii. 6). As there is no created power that can resist death, so with the soul that loves God there is no difficulty that love cannot overcome. O my Jesus, send Thy Holy Spirit that He may come and strengthen me to do and suffer something for Thy love before death overtakes me.

I.

*Fortis est ut mors delectio. Love is strong as death.* As there is no created power than can resist death, so to the soul that loves God, there is no difficulty which

yields not to love. When the soul that loves would please its Beloved, love overcomes all losses, contempt, and sorrows: "Nothing is so hard but that it may be conquered by the fire of love." This is the most certain mark by which to know whether a soul really loves God, its being as faithful to Him when things are adverse as when they are prosperous. St. Francis of Sales says: "God is just as amiable when He chastises us as when He consoles us, because He does both from love."

O God of my soul, I say that I love Thee, and yet what do I do for Thy love? Nothing. It is a sign, therefore, that I either do not love Thee, or love Thee too little. Send, therefore, O Jesus, the Holy Ghost upon me, and come and strengthen me to do and to suffer something for Thy love before death overtake me. Suffer me not, O Lord, to depart out of this life cold and ungrateful, as I have hitherto been. Give me strength to love sufferings, on account of the many sins by which I have deserved hell. O my God, Who art all goodness and all love, Thou desirest to dwell in my soul, from which I have so often expelled Thee; come and take possession of it; dwell within it and make it all Thine own.

II.

When God afflicts us the most in this life, He loves us the most. St. John Chrysostom considered St. Paul bound in chains more happy than St. Paul rapt to the third heavens. Hence the holy Martyrs, in the midst of their torments, rejoiced, and gave thanks to God for the great favour He conferred upon them in allowing them to suffer for His love. And the other Saints, when tyrants were wanting to afflict them, became their own tormentors by the penances which they imposed upon themselves, in order to please God. St. Augustine says: "He who loves, either does not feel the labour, or the labour itself is loved."

I love Thee, O my Lord; and if I love Thee, Thou art



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with me, as St. John assures me: *He that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him*—(1 John iv. 16). Since, therefore, Thou art with me, increase the flames, the chains of Thy love, that I may neither desire, nor seek, nor love any other but Thee, and thus bound by Thy love, may never separate myself from Thee any more. I desire, O Jesus, to be Thine, to be all Thine. O Mary, my Queen and advocate, obtain for me love and holy perseverance.

## Spiritual Reading

### *GOING TO HOLY COMMUNION.*

Of all the Sacraments the adorable Sacrament of the altar is the most excellent. The other Sacraments contain the gifts of God, but the Holy Eucharist contains God Himself. Hence St. Thomas says that the other Sacraments have been instituted by Jesus Christ to prepare men either to receive or to administer the Blessed Eucharist, which, according to the holy Doctor, is the consummation of the spiritual life; because from this Sacrament is derived all the perfection of the soul. For all perfection consists in a union with God; and of all the means of uniting the soul to Him there is none better than Holy Communion by which, as Jesus Christ Himself has said, the soul becomes as it were one thing with Him. *He that eateth my flesh . . . abideth in me and I in him* —(Jo. vi. 57). Hence St. John Chrysostom says that Jesus has given His Body to us under the species of bread that we may become one thing with Him. And St. Cyril of Alexander teaches that as two pieces of wax melted together become one, so we, by Holy Communion, are similarly united with Jesus Christ.

Our Saviour instituted this Sacrament under the form of food to show that, as corporal food is changed into our

flesh, so this heavenly Bread becomes one thing with us; but with this difference, that earthly food is converted into our substance, while this divine Bread transforms those who eat into Jesus Christ. This is the reason why Rupert makes our Lord say : " Eat, and you shall be by grace what I am by nature." And this is what our Lord deigned to say one day to St. Augustine : " I will not be changed into you, but you shall be changed into me." The principal effect of this Sacrament is to preserve in the soul the life of grace. Hence, it is called bread; for as earthly bread supports corporal life, so this heavenly Bread preserves the life of the soul which consists in the grace of God.

The Eucharist is, according to the Council of Trent, the divine medicine that purifies the soul from venial faults, and preserves it from mortal sins. Like a stream of water, this Sacrament extinguishes the ardour of the passions by which we are consumed. Let him in whose soul the flame of some particular passion is kindled approach Holy Communion, and he will find the passion altogether, or at least in a great measure, destroyed. " If any of you," says St. Bernard, " does not experience so frequent or so violent motions of anger, of envy, or of lust, let him give thanks to the Body of the Lord that produces fruit in his soul." The angelic Doctor teaches that the Communion gives us strength to overcome all the attacks of the devil. " It repels every assault of the demons." St. John Chrysostom asserts that when we receive the Holy Eucharist, the devils are put to flight, and the Angels fly to our assistance. Moreover, this Sacrament infuses into the soul great interior peace, a strong inclination to virtue, and a great willingness to practise it, and thus renders it easy to walk in the path of perfection.

Holy Communion, as St. Thomas teaches, infuses divine charity into the heart. Jesus Christ protested that He came into the world for no other purpose than to kindle in our souls the holy fire of divine love. *I come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be*

*kindled?*—(Luke xii. 49). The Venerable Father Olimpio, of the Order of Theatines, used to say, that there is no Mystery of Redemption more apt to inflame us with the love of Jesus Christ than the Sacrament of the altar in which He gives Himself entirely to us, and pours forth all His love. Hence, speaking of the institution of this Sacrament, St. John says : *Jesus knowing that his hour was come that he should pass out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, loved them unto the end*—(John xiii. i). *He loved them to the end*, that is, according to the commentators, he loved them to the utmost of His power. Hence the Council of Trent said that in this Sacrament Jesus "poured forth, as it were, all the riches of His divine love towards man." Holy Communion has been called by St. Thomas "the Sacrament of love"; and by St. Bernard "the love of loves." St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi used to call the day of Communion "the day of love"; and would say that a soul after Communion might exclaim with Jesus dying on the Cross : *It is consummated!* For after having given Himself to me, God has nothing more to give me; nor can I desire anything else from Him.

## Evening Meditation

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## *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

### VI.—THE MEANS OF AVOIDING LUKEWARMNESS AND ATTAINING PERFECTION.

I.

We must begin quickly, and not wait for the morrow. Who knows whether we shall afterwards find time or not! Ecclesiastes counsels us : *Whatsoever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly*—(Eccles. ix. 10). What

thou canst do, do it quickly, and defer it not; and he adduces the reason why : *For neither work, nor reason, nor wisdom, nor knowledge shall be in hell, whither thou art hastening.* Because in the next life there is no more time to work, nor free-will to merit, nor prudence to do well, nor wisdom or experience to take good counsel by, for after death what is done is done. A nun of the convent of Torre de Specchi in Rome, whose name was Sister Bonaventura, led a very lukewarm kind of life. There came a Religious, Father Lancisius, to give the spiritual exercises to the nuns, and Sister Bonaventura, feeling no inclination to shake off her tepidity, began to listen to the exercises with no good will. But at the very first sermon she was won by Divine grace, so that she immediately went to the feet of the Father who preached, and said to him, with at tone of real determination, " Father, I wish to become a saint, and quickly a saint." And, by the assistance of God, she did so; for she only lived eight months after that event, and during that short time she lived and died a Saint.

II.

David said : *And I said, now have I begun*—(Ps. lxxvi. 11). So likewise did St. Charles Borromeo speak : " To-day I begin to serve God." And we should act in the same way as if we had hitherto done no good whatever; for indeed, all that we do for God is nothing, since we are bound to do it. Let us therefore each day resolve to begin afresh to belong wholly to God. Neither let us stop to observe what or how others act. They who become truly saints are few. St. Bernard says : " One cannot be perfect without being singular " If we would imitate the common run of men, we should always remain imperfect, as for the most part they are. We must overcome all, renounce all, in order to gain all. St. Teresa said : " Because we do not come to the conclusion of giving all our affection to God, so neither does He give all His love

to us." Oh God, how little is all that is given to Jesus Christ, Who has given His Blood and His life for us! "However much we give," says the same Saint, "is but mire, in comparison of one single drop of Blood shed for us by our Blessed Lord." The Saints know not how to spare themselves, when there is a question of pleasing a God Who gave Himself wholly, without reserve, on purpose to oblige us to deny Him nothing. St. Chrysostom wrote: "He gave all to thee, and kept nothing for Himself." God has bestowed His entire Self upon thee; there is, then, no excuse for thee to behave reservedly with God. He has even died for us all, says the Apostle, in order that each one of us may live only for Him Who died for us: *Christ died for all; that they also who live may not now live to themselves, but unto him who died for them*—(2 Cor. v. 15).

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## Thursday Within the Octave of Ascension

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### Morning Meditation

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### *DIVINE LOVE CAUSES GOD TO DWELL IN OUR SOULS.*

"*Dulcis Hospes Animae.*"

The Holy Ghost is called *Sweet Guest of the Soul.* This was the great promise made by Jesus Christ to those who love Him: *If you love me, keep my commandments; and I will ask the Father and he will give you*

*another Paraclete that he may abide with you for ever* —(John xiv. 15, 16).

I.

The Holy Ghost is called *Sweet Guest of the Soul.* The great promise made by Jesus Christ to those who should love Him was this : *If you love me, keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever*—(John xiv. 15, 16). Hence the Holy Ghost will never abandon the soul, if the soul does not drive Him away : *He does not forsake, unless he be forsaken.*

God, then, dwells in our souls when we love Him, but He declares that He is not satisfied with us unless we love Him with our whole hearts. St. Augustine writes, that the Roman Senate would not admit Jesus into the number of their gods, because said they, He is a proud God, Who will have no other adored but Himself. And so it is ; He will not admit a companion in the heart that loves Him ; He must dwell there alone, and be the only object loved. And when He sees that He is not the only object loved He is jealous, as it were, as St. John Chrysostom writes, of those creatures which divide with Him a heart which He desires to have entirely to Himself. *Do you think that the Scripture saith in vain? To envy doth the spirit covet which dwelleth in you*—(James iv. 5).

O my God, I see that Thou desirest that I should be all Thine. I have many times expelled Thee from my soul, and yet Thou disdainest not to return to me, and to unite Thyself to me. Oh, do Thou now take possession of my whole self. I give myself this day entirely to Thee.

II.

In a word, as St. Jerome says, Jesus is jealous. Hence the heavenly Spouse praises the soul which, as the turtle

dove, lives alone and hidden from the world : *Thy cheeks are beautiful as the turtle dove's*—(Cant. i. 9), because He desires that the world should not take any part of that love which He desires to have entirely Himself. Again, the spouse is praised because she is a *garden enclosed*—(Cant. iv. 12). A garden closed up against all worldly love. Can it be that Jesus does not deserve all our love? "He gave His whole self to Thee," says St. John Chrysostom, "leaving nothing for Himself." He has given Thee His Blood and His life; nothing more remains for Him to give thee.

Do Thou accept of me, O Jesus, and grant that, for the future, I may never live one moment deprived of Thy love. Thou seekest me, and I seek no other but Thee. Thou desirest my soul, and my soul desires no other but Thee. Thou lovest me, and I love Thee; and because Thou lovest me, bind me in such a manner to Thee, that I may never more be separated from Thee. O Queen of Heaven, pray for me.

## Spiritual Reading

### *GOING FREQUENTLY TO HOLY COMMUNION.*

Which of the two, asks Cassian, is the more humble—the man that communicates often or he that communicates but seldom? He answers that the person that frequently receives Jesus Christ is the more humble, because he knows his infirmities, and therefore seeks more frequently the remedy of his disease. The angelic Doctor says that though to abstain from Communion through humility and fear is pleasing to God, still the love and confidence that induce a soul to receive Him are more acceptable in His sight. Love and hope, to which the Scriptures constantly exhort us, are preferable to fear.

You will say : I do not know whether I am in the state

of grace. But I ask, do you expect that an Angel will come from Heaven to assure you that you are in the state of grace? Is it not enough for you to have the assurance of your confessor? You ought to place more confidence in the testimony of the minister of God than in the revelations of all the Angels of Paradise; for in receiving a communication from Angels, there might be an illusion, but in listening to the confessor who, in your regard, holds the place of God, there is no danger of deception. Whenever, then, your spiritual Father allows you to communicate, take care not to obey the suggestions of the devil by abstaining from Communion through fear and scruples.

I cannot, you will say, bring myself to communicate often, because I constantly commit faults and never amend. The greater you perceive your infirmities to be, the more frequently you ought to seek a remedy for them in Holy Communion. "Because," says St. Ambrose, "I always sin, I should always use a remedy." We buttress walls that are leaning, not to make them erect but to prevent them from falling. You say that you perceive in yourself no amendment. Will you improve without the aid of Holy Communion? No; you will, on the contrary, grow worse every day. Father Granada says that "he that desires to be cured of his infirmities should not abstain from this great remedy." The bare remembrance of having communicated in the morning, and the thought of having to communicate the next day, makes a person more watchful and more attentive to the correction of his faults. Besides, the Sacrament Itself infuses an increase of light and strength into the soul. Theologians generally assert that the Holy Eucharist produces more grace than all the other Sacraments, because it contains Jesus Christ Himself who is the Author of grace. A present that a prince makes with his own hand is more valuable than the gifts that he dispenses through the hands of others.

You will say: I feel myself distracted, cold, and without devotion. What, I ask, do you understand by devotion? If you mean sensible fervour, I say that it is not neces-

sary : it is enough to have fervour in the will, or a determination to do what you know to be pleasing to God. This is the true devotion and fervour that God demands of you; and though you do not feel this fervour of the will, you should, notwithstanding, communicate in order to obtain it by means of the Holy Sacrament. For if you abstain from Communion because you have not sensible fervour, you will, as Gerson says, imitate the folly of those who, when cold, refuse to approach the fire because they do not feel warm. According to St. Laurence Justinian, this Sacrament sometimes produces its effect, though we do not perceive it. St. Bonaventure says : " Although you feel tepid, approach with confidence; for the greater your infirmity the more you stand in need of a physician." Do not be deterred from frequent Communion because you experience more devotion when you communicate seldom than when you communicate often. He that eats but seldom eats with great eagerness but with less profit; and, if you communicate but seldom you may, perhaps, feel a little more of sensible fervour, but you will also receive less fruit; because your soul will want the food that gives strength to avoid sins and imperfections. Seek not, then, sensible devotion in your Communions. Communicate only for the purpose of uniting your soul more closely to God, and be assured that, as often as you communicate with that view, your Communions will be productive of great fruit.

## Evening Meditation

### *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

VII.—THE MEANS OF AVOIDING LUKEWARMNESS AND ATTAINING PERFECTION.

I.

The third means of becoming a saint is *mental prayer.* John Gerson writes : " He who does not meditate on the eternal truths cannot, without a miracle, lead the life of a Christian. The reason is, because without mental prayer light fails us, and we walk in the dark. The truths of faith are not seen by the eyes of the body, but by the eyes of the mind, when we meditate; he that fails to meditate on them, fails to see them, and therefore walks in the dark; and being in the dark, he easily grows attached to sensible things, for the sake of which he then comes to despise the eternal." St. Teresa wrote as follows to the Bishop of Osma : " Although we seem to discover in ourselves no imperfections; yet, when God opens the eyes of the soul, which He is wont to do in prayer, then they plainly appear." And St. Bernard had before said, that he who does not meditate " does not abhor himself, simply because he does not know himself." " Prayer," says the Saint, " regulates the affections and directs the actions"; it keeps the affections of the soul in order, and directs all our actions to God; but without prayer the affections become attached to earth, the actions conform themselves to the affections, and in this manner all runs into disorder.

II.

We read of an awful example of this in the life of the Venerable Sister Mary Crucified of Sicily. Whilst this servant of God was praying, she heard a devil making a

boast that he had succeeded in withdrawing a Religious from the Community-prayer; and she saw in spirit, that after this omission the devil tempted her to consent to a grievous sin, and that she was on the point of yielding. She forthwith accosted her, and by a timely admonition prevented her falling. St. Teresa said, that whoever leaves off prayer "very shortly becomes either a brute-beast or a devil."

O Jesus, my Love, I repent of my lukewarmness, I am determined to love Thee as much as I can, and I wish to become a saint; and I wish to become a saint for this reason, in order to give Thee pleasure, and to love Thee exceedingly in this life and the next! I can do nothing of myself, but Thou canst do all things; and I know that Thou wishest me to become a saint. I see already by Thy grace my soul sighs only for Thee, and seeks nothing else but Thee. I wish to live no more for myself; Thou desirest me to be wholly Thine, and I desire to be wholly Thine. Come, and unite me to Thyself, and Thyself to me. Thou art Infinite Goodness; Thou art He who hast loved me so much; Thou art, indeed, too loving and too lovely; how, then, can I love any thing but Thee? I prefer Thy love before all the things of this world; Thou art the sole object, the sole end of all my affections. I leave all to be occupied solely in loving Thee, my Redeemer, my Comforter, my Hope, my Love, and my All.

# Friday Within the Octave of Ascension

## Morning Meditation

### *DIVINE LOVE A SACRED BOND THAT BINDS THE SOUL TO GOD.*

As the Holy Ghost is the indissoluble bond which unites the Father and the Eternal Word, so also is He the bond that unites our souls and God. O Love, Thy bond is so strong that it is able to bind even God and unite Him to our souls!

I.

As the Holy Ghost, Who is uncreated Love, is the indissoluble bond uniting the Father and the Eternal Word, so also He unites the soul with God: "Charity is a virtue," says St. Augustine, "uniting us with God." Hence St. Laurence Justinian with great joy exclaims: "O love, how strong is thy bond, which is capable of binding God!" The bonds of the world are bonds of death, but the bonds of God are bonds of life and salvation: *Her bands are a healthful binding*—(Ecclus. vi. 31), because the bonds of God, by means of love, unite us with God Who is our true and only life.

Before the coming of Jesus Christ men turned away from God, and being attached to the earth, refused to be united with their Creator; but our loving Lord has drawn us to Him by the bonds of love, as the Prophet Osee foretold: *I will draw them with the cords of Adam, with the bands of love*—(Osee xi. 4). These bonds are His benefits, His lights, His calls to love Him, and His

promises of Heaven; but, above all, they are the gifts which Jesus Christ has bestowed upon us in giving us Himself in the Sacrifice of the Cross, and in the Sacrament of the Altar, and ultimately in sending down upon us the Holy Ghost.

My dear Jesus, Thou hast indeed done too much to oblige me to love Thee, too dearly hast Thou paid to purchase my love; too ungrateful, therefore, should I be if I were to love Thee but little, or to divide my heart between Thee and creatures, after Thou hast shed Thy Blood and laid down Thy life for me. I desire to detach myself from all things else, in order to give my whole affections to Thee. But I am too weak of myself to execute this desire; do Thou, Who inspirest me with it, give me strength to execute it.

II.

The Prophet Isaias exclaims: *Loosing the bonds from off thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion*—(lii. 2). O my soul, thou who art created for Heaven, loose from off thy neck the bonds of the earth, and unite thyself to God by the bonds of love. *Have charity, which is the bond of perfection*—(Colos. iii. 14). Love is a bond which unites with itself all other virtues, and makes the soul perfect. "Love," says St. Augustine, "and do what thou pleasest." Yes, love God and do what thou wilt, because he who loves God, carefully avoids giving any offence to his Beloved, and seek in all things to please Him.

O my Jesus, pierce my poor heart with the sweet dart of Thy love that I may ever languish with the desire of Thee, and be dissolved with the love of Thee. May I ever seek only Thee, desire only Thee, and find only Thee! O Jesus, I desire only Thee alone. Grant that I may ever repeat during life, and especially at the hour of my death: I desire Thee alone! O Mary, my Mother, pray that from henceforth I may never desire anything but God.

## Spiritual Reading

### *GOING FREQUENTLY TO HOLY COMMUNION.*

You say again : I abstain from Communion to escape the censure of others that see my imperfections and rebuke me for communicating so frequently. To this pretext I answer : If you communicate with the advice of your director, and though a motive of advancing in divine love or of correcting your defects, be not disturbed by the complaints or censures of others. According to Blessed John of Avila, they who censure others for frequent Communion perform the office of the devil. Will you then pay attention to their remarks? Listen to the words of St. Francis de Sales : " If," he says, " they ask you why you communicate so often, tell them that two classes of persons should communicate frequently, the perfect to preserve perfection; and the imperfect, to attain perfection; the strong, lest they become weak; and the weak, to grow strong; the sick to be cured, and the healthy, to prevent sickness. And as to yourself, tell them that, because you are imperfect, weak, and infirm, you stand in need of frequent Communion. Tell them that all who are free from worldly occupations, because they have the opportunity, and all who are engaged in them, because they have need of Communion, should communicate frequently." In conclusion, he says : "Philothea, communicate often, and as often as possible, with the advice of your spiritual Father; and believe me that, as the hares on our mountains become white because they feed only on snow, so, by eating purity itself in this Sacrament you will become all pure." To St. Frances of Rome, as she was going to Communion, the devil said : "How can you, who are so full of venial sins, dare receive the Immaculate Lamb?" Perceiving that the enemy wished to deprive her of Communion, she banished him by spitting in his face. The Blessed Virgin immediately

appeared to her, and, after having praised her conduct, said that our defects, instead of being an obstacle, should be an incentive to Communion, since, in Communion, we find the remedy of all our miseries.

You will perhaps say : I have not time to prepare as I ought for Holy Communion. I answer : if your time is spent in useless occupations or discourses, then your excuse is frivolous. But if you be employed in performing the duties of your office, or of obedience, rest assured that the discharge of these duties, with a view to please God, will be an excellent preparation for Communion. St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi was once engaged in making bread, when the bell rang for Communion; she instantly obeyed the call, and in an ecstasy received the Holy Sacrament. Hence she was accustomed to say to her Sisters : " Offer to God all your actions as a preparation for Communion, perform them with the intention of pleasing Him, and communicate." Whenever the want of time arises from your being employed in the performance of your duties, in the care of the sick, or in the performance of any work of charity that cannot be deferred, you should never abstain from Communion in consequence of not having sufficient time for preparation. But be careful to avoid as much as possible all unnecessary conversations and amusements, and when you foresee that in the morning you will not have time to prepare for Communion, endeavour on the preceding evening to make some preparation, by reading a book of piety, and by making the acts that ought to be made in the morning; or rise a little before the usual hour and spend whatever time may be at your disposal in preparation for the Holy Sacrament.

Oh ! what great and continual progress is made in divine love by those who, with a strong desire, frequent Holy Communion ! Oh ! how wonderfully does the Lord draw them to His love ! St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi once saw a soul suffering in Purgatory for having through carelessness omitted one Communion. And we read in her Life that she several times burst into tears because a

Sister in her Community abstained from Communion through negligence. Be assured that of all your devotions there is none more dear to Jesus Christ than your Communions. For all perfection consists in a perfect union with God; and Holy Communion is the action that unites the soul most closely to Jesus, and consequently you can do nothing more pleasing in His sight. Hence, the same St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi used to say: "I would rather die than omit a Communion permitted by obedience."

## Evening Meditation

### *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

#### VIII.—THE MEANS OF AVOIDING LUKEWARMNESS AND ATTAINING PERFECTION.

He that leaves off prayer, will leave off loving Jesus Christ. Prayer is the blessed furnace where the fire of holy love is enkindled and kept alive: *And in my meditation a fire shall flame out*—(Ps. xxxviii. 4). It was said by St. Catherine of Bologna: "The person that foregoes the practice of prayer breaks the chain which binds the soul to God." It follows that the devil, finding the soul cold in Divine love, will have little difficulty in inducing her to partake of some poisonous fruit or other. St. Teresa said, on the contrary: "Whosoever perseveres in prayer, let him hold for a certainty, that with however many sins the devil may surround him, the Lord will eventually bring him into the haven of salvation." In another place the Saint says: "Whoever halts not in the way of prayer arrives sooner or later." And elsewhere she writes that it is on this account the devil labours so hard to withdraw souls from prayer, because he well knows that he has missed gaining those who faithfully persevere in prayer.

Oh, how great are the benefits that flow from prayer! In prayer we conceive holy thoughts, we practise devout affections, we excite great desires, and form efficacious resolutions to give ourselves wholly to God; and thus the soul is led for His sake to sacrifice earthly pleasures and all disorderly appetites. It was said by St. Aloysius Gonzaga: "There will never be much perfection without much prayer." Let him who longs for perfection mark well this notable saying of the Saint.

II.

We should not go to prayer in order to taste the sweetness of Divine love; whoever prays from such a motive will lose his time, or at least derive little advantage from it. A person should go to prayer solely to please God, that is, solely to learn what the will of God is in his regard, and to beg of Him the help to put it in practice. The Venerable Father Antony Torres said: "To carry the cross without consolation makes souls fly to perfection. Prayer unattended with sensible consolations confers greater fruit on the soul. But pitiable is the poor soul that leaves off prayer because she finds no relish in it." St. Teresa said: "When a soul leaves off prayer, it is as if she cast herself into hell without any need of devils."

# Saturday—Vigil of Pentecost

## Morning Meditation

### *DIVINE LOVE IS A TREASURE CONTAINING EVERY GOOD.*

"*Infinitus thesaurus hominibus.*"

Divine Love is that Treasure, to purchase which, the Gospel says, we should leave all things; for this love makes us partakers of the friendship of God. *An infinite treasure which they that use become the friends of God.*

I.

Divine love is that Treasure, to purchase which, as the Gospel says, a man should give up all things, for this love makes us partakers of the friendship of God : *An infinite treasure to men, which they that use become the friends of God*—(Wis. vii. 14). "O men," says St. Augustine, "whither go ye in search of good things? Seek the one only Good in Whom are all good things." But we cannot find the only Good—namely, God—unless we renounce the things of the earth. St. Teresa writes : "Detach thy heart from creatures, and thou shalt find God." He who finds God, finds all that he can desire. *Delight in the Lord, and he will grant thee the desire of thy heart*—(Ps. xxxvi. 4). The human heart is continually seeking after such good things as may make it happy, but if it seek them from creatures, how much soever it may acquire, it

will never be satisfied with them; but if it seek only God, God will satisfy all its desires. Who but the Saints are most happy in this world? And why? Because they desire and seek only God. A certain prince, going to the chase, saw a solitary running swiftly through the forest, and asked him what he was seeking for in that desert place. The solitary replied: "And thou, O prince, what art thou in quest of?" The prince: "I am going in quest of wild beasts." "And I," said the hermit, "am going in quest of God."

My God, hitherto I have sought not Thee, but myself and my own gratifications, and for these I have turned my back upon Thee, my sovereign Good. But I am consoled with the words of Jeremias: *The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh him*—(Lam. iii. 25). These words assure me that Thou, my God, art all goodness towards him who seeks Thee.

II.

The tyrant offered St. Clement gold and gems if he would renounce Jesus Christ; on which the Saint exclaimed with a deep sigh: "Alas, God is put in competition with a little mire!" Happy is he who knows the value of the treasure of Divine love and seeks to obtain it! He who obtains it will divest himself of all things else, that he may possess God alone. "When the house is on fire," says St. Francis of Sales, "all the goods are thrown out of the windows." And Father Paul Segneri the Younger, a great servant of God, was accustomed to say that love was a thief which robbed us of all worldly affections, so that we can in all truth say: "What do I desire, but Thee alone, my God?"

My beloved Saviour, I know the evil I have committed in forsaking Thee, and I repent of it with my whole heart. I know Thou art an infinite Treasure. I will not abuse the light. I forsake all things, and choose Thee for my only Love. My God, my Love, my All, I love Thee, I

desire Thee, I sigh after Thee. Come, O Holy Spirit, and destroy in me by Thy sacred fire every affection which has not Thee for its object. Grant that I may be all Thine, and that I may conquer every thing to please Thee. O Mary, my advocate and my Mother, do thou help me by thy prayers.

## Spiritual Reading

### *PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION.*

St. Francis de Sales says, that our Saviour can never be seen more amiable and more tender, in all that He has done for us, than in Holy Communion, in which He, so to say, annihilates Himself and becomes Food, that He may unite Himself to the hearts and bodies of His faithful. Therefore the learned Gerson used also to say, that there was no means more efficacious than the Holy Communion whereby to enkindle devotion and the holy love of God in our souls.

And, indeed, if we speak of doing something agreeable to God, what can a soul do more agreeable to Him than to receive Communion? St. Denis teaches us that love always tends towards perfect union; but how can a soul be more perfectly united with Jesus than in the manner of which He speaks Himself, saying: *He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me and I in him*—(Jo. vi. 57). St. Augustine says, that if every day you receive this Sacrament, Jesus will be always with you, and you will always advance in divine love.

Again, if there is question of healing our spiritual infirmities, what more certain remedy can we have than the Holy Communion, which is called by the sacred Council of Trent "a remedy whereby we may be freed from daily faults, and be preserved from mortal sins."

Whence does it come, asks Cardinal Bona, that in so

many souls we see so little fruit from frequent Communion, and that they constantly relapse into the same faults? He replies: "The fault is not in the Food, but in the disposition of him who receives It." *Can a man* says Solomon, *hide a fire in his bosom, and his garments not burn?*—(Prov. vi. 27). God is a consuming fire. He comes Himself in the Holy Communion to enkindle this divine fire; how is it, then, says William of Paris, that we see so diabolical a miracle as that souls should remain cold in divine love in the midst of such flames?

All comes from the want of proper dispositions, and especially from the want of *preparation*. Fire immediately inflames dry but not green wood; for this latter is not fit to burn. The Saints derived great benefit from their Communions, because they prepared themselves with very great care. St. Aloysius Gonsaga devoted three days to his *preparation* for Holy Communion, and three days he spent in *thanksgiving* to his Lord.

To prepare well for Holy Communion a soul should be disposed on two main points: it should be detached from creatures, and have a great desire to advance in divine love.

1. In the first place, then, a soul should detach itself from all things, and drive everything from its heart which is not God. *He that is washed*, saith Jesus, *needeth not but to wash his feet, but is clean wholly*—(Jo. xiii. 10). Which signifies, as St. Bernard explains it, that in order to receive this Sacrament with great fruit, we should not only be cleansed from mortal sins, but our feet also should be washed, that is, we should be free from all earthly affections; for, being in contact with the earth, they excite a sort of repugnance in God, and soiling the soul, prevent the effects of Holy Communion.

St. Gertrude asked our Lord what preparations He required of her for the Holy Communion; and He replied: "I only ask that thou shouldst come empty of thyself, to receive Me."

2. In the second place it is necessary, in the Holy Communion, to have a great desire to receive Jesus Christ

and His holy love. In this sacred Banquet, says Gerson, only those who are famishing receive their fill; and the most Blessed Virgin Mary had already said the same thing: *He hath filled the hungry with good things* —(Luke i. 53). As Jesus, writes the Blessed Father Avila, came into this world only after He had been much and long desired, so does He only enter a soul that desires Him; for it is not becoming that such Food should be given to him who has a loathing for It. Our Lord one day said to St. Matilda: "No bee flies with such impetuosity to flowers, to suck their honey, as I fly to souls in the Holy Communion, driven by the violence of my love." Since, then, Jesus Christ has so great a desire to come into our souls, it is right that we also should have a great desire to receive Him and His divine love in the Holy Communion. St. Francis de Sales teaches us that the principal object a soul should have in view in communicating should be, to advance in the love of God; since He, Who for love alone gives Himself to us, should be received for love.

## Evening Meditation

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### *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

#### IX.—THE MEANS OF AVOIDING LUKEWARMNESS AND ATTAINING PERFECTION.

I.

It results from the practice of prayer that a person constantly thinks of God. "The true lover," says St. Teresa, "is ever mindful of the beloved One. And hence it follows that persons of prayer are always speak- of God, knowing, as they do, how pleasing it is to God that His lovers should delight in conversing about Him, and on the love He bears them, and that thus they

should endeavour to enkindle it in others." The same Saint wrote: "Jesus Christ is always present at the conversations of the servants of God, and He is very much gratified to be the subject of their delight."

Prayer, again, creates that desire of retiring into solitude, in order to converse alone with God, and to maintain interior recollection in the discharge of necessary external duties; I say *necessary*, such as the management of one's family, or of the performance of duties required of us by obedience; because a man of prayer must love solitude, and avoid dissipation in superfluous and useless affairs, otherwise he will lose the spirit of recollection, which is a great means of preserving union with God: *My sister, my spouse, is a garden enclosed* —(Cant. iv. 12).

II.

The soul espoused to Jesus Christ must be a garden closed to all creatures, and must not admit into her heart other thoughts, nor other business, but those of God or for God. Hearts thrown open never become holy. The Saints, who have to labour in gaining souls to God, do not lose their recollection in the midst of all their labours, either of preaching, confessing, reconciling enemies, or assisting the sick. The same rule holds good with those who have to apply to study. How many from excessive study, and a desire to become learned, become neither holy nor learned, because true learning consists in the science of the Saints; that is to say, in knowing how to love Jesus Christ; whereas, on the contrary, Divine love brings with it knowledge and every good: *All good things come to me together with her*—(Wis. vii. 11), that is, with holy charity. St. John Berchmans had an extraordinary love for study, but by his great virtue he never allowed study to interfere with his spiritual interests. The Apostle exhorts us: *Not to be more wise than it behoveth to be wise, but to be wise unto sobriety*—(Rom. xii. 3). A priest

especially must have knowledge; he must know things, because he has to instruct others in the Divine Law : *For the lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth*—(Mal. ii. 7). He must have knowledge, but unto *sobriety*. He that leaves prayer for study shows that in his study he seeks himself, and not God. He that seeks God leaves study (if it be not absolutely necessary) in order not to omit prayer.

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# Pentecost Sunday

## Morning Meditation

### *THE COMING OF THE HOLY GHOST INTO THE SOUL.*

The Eternal Father was not content with giving us His Son, Jesus Christ, to save us by His death, He has given us also the Holy Ghost to dwell always in our souls and keep them inflamed with His holy love. Hence, when the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles, He appeared in the form of tongues of fire. This is the holy fire that inflamed the Saints with the desire to do great things for God, that enabled them to love their most cruel enemies, to seek after contempt, to renounce all the riches and honours of the world, and even to embrace torments and death.

I.

The Holy Ghost is that divine bond which unites the Father with the Son; it is He Who unites our souls, through love, with God. For, as St. Augustine says, union with God is the effect of love. "Charity is a virtue which unites us with God." The chains of the world are chains of death, but the bonds of the Holy Ghost are bonds of Eternal life, because they bind us to God, Who is our true and only Life.

Let us also remember that all the lights, inspirations, divine calls, all the good acts we have performed during our life, all our acts of contrition, of confidence in the divine mercy, of love, of resignation, have been the gifts of the Holy Ghost. *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings*—(Rom. viii. 26). Thus, it is the Holy Ghost Who prays for us; for we know not what to ask, but the Holy Spirit teaches us what we should pray for.

O holy and divine Spirit, come into my heart and teach me to pray as I ought. Give me strength not to neglect prayer in times of weariness and dryness. I have been lost by my sins. Thou desirest my sanctification and salvation, and I, too, earnestly desire to become holy. I love Thee, my sovereign Good, my Love, my All, and because I love Thee, I give myself wholly to Thee. O Blessed Virgin Mary, protect me.

II.

We know by Faith that the Holy Ghost is the Love that the Eternal Father and the Eternal Word bear one another, and therefore the gift of divine charity which the Lord infuses into our souls, and which is the greatest of all gifts, is particularly attributed to the Holy Ghost, as St. Paul teaches: *The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us*

—(Rom. v. 5). And our Lord Himself made this great promise : If you love Me I will pray My Father, and He will send you the Holy Spirit that He may always dwell in you. *If you love me, keep my commandments. And I will ask my Father and he will give you another Paraclete that he may abide with you for ever*—(Jo. xiv. 15, 16).

O Holy Spirit, divine Paraclete, Father of the poor, Consoler of the afflicted, Light of hearts, Sanctifier of souls, behold me prostrate in Thy Presence. I adore Thee with the most profound submission. I love Thee with all my affections. I have been so ungrateful as to offend Thee. I ask a thousand pardons for all my sins. I offer Thee my heart, cold as it is, and I supplicate Thee to let a ray of Thy light and a spark of Thy fire enter therein. Thou art a divine Spirit, fortify me against the wicked spirits : Thou art a Fire, enkindle in me the fire of Thy love : Thou art a Light, enlighten me that I may know the things of eternity : Thou art the Author of the heavenly gifts, I beseech Thee to grant them to me. Vivify me by Thy grace, sanctify me by Thy charity, govern me by Thy wisdom, adopt me by Thy beauty as Thy child, and save me by Thy infinite mercy. Amen.

## Spiritual Reading

### *THANKSGIVING AFTER COMMUNION.*

There is no prayer more agreeable to God, or more profitable to the soul, than that which is made during the *Thanksgiving after Communion.* It is the opinion of many grave writers (Suarez, Cajetan, Valentia, De Lugo, and others), that the Holy Communion, as long as the Sacramental species last, constantly produces greater and greater graces in the soul, provided the soul is then

constant in disposing itself by new acts of virtue. The Council of Florence, in the Decree of Eugenius IV to the Armenians, teaches that the Blessed Sacrament produces the same effect in the soul as material food, which, when it enters the body, produces effects according to the state in which it finds it.

For this reason, holy souls endeavour to remain as long as possible in prayer after Communion. The Blessed John of Avila, even when he was giving his missions, used to remain for at least two hours in prayer. Father Balthazar Alvarez used to say, that we should set great value on the time after Communion, imagining that we hear from the lips of Jesus Christ Himself the words that He addressed to His disciples : *But me you have not always with you*—(Matt. xxvi. 11).

It is not advisable, as many do, to begin to read immediately after Communion : it is better to spend at least a short time in producing holy affections, and in conversing with Jesus, Who is then within us, and in repeating many times words of tenderness, or some fervent prayer. Jesus Christ repeated the same prayer in the Garden three times : *And he prayed the third time, saying the self-same word*—(Matt. xxvi. 44). In affections and prayers it is, then, that the soul should entertain itself with Jesus after Communion; for we must know that the acts formed in prayer after Communion are far more precious and meritorious in the sight of God than when made at another time; for the soul being then united with Jesus, the value of the acts is increased by the presence of Jesus. We should, moreover, know, that after Communion Jesus Christ is more disposed to grant graces. St. Teresa says, that after Communion Jesus places Himself in the soul as on a throne of grace, and then says : *What willest thou that I should do for thee?* —(Mark x. 51) meaning : O soul, I am come for the express purpose of granting thee graces : ask Me what thou wilt, and as much as thou wilt, and thou shalt receive all.

Oh, what treasures of grace would you receive, devout

soul, if you only entertained yourself with Jesus for an hour, or at least half-an-hour, after Communion! After your thanksgiving is ended, be also careful during the whole day on which you have communicated to keep yourself united by affections and prayers with Jesus, Whom you have received.

## Evening Meditation

### *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

#### X.—THE MEANS OF AVOIDING LUKEWARMNESS AND ATTAINING PERFECTION.

I.

The greatest evil is, that without mental prayer we do not pray at all. I have spoken frequently in my spiritual works of the necessity of prayer, and more especially in a little volume entitled, *On Prayer, the Great Means of Salvation and Perfection*; and here also I will say a few other things. It will be sufficient, then, to quote the opinion of the Venerable Palafox, Bishop of Osma: "How can charity last, unless God grants us perseverance? How will the Lord grant us perseverance unless we ask it of Him? And how shall we ask it of Him except by prayer? Without prayer there is no communication with God for the preservation of virtue." And so it is, because he that neglects mental prayer sees very little into the wants of his soul; he knows little of the dangers of his salvation, of the means to be used in order to overcome temptations; and so, understanding little of the necessity of prayer, he leaves off praying, and will certainly be lost.

II.

Then as regards subjects for Meditation, nothing is

more useful than to meditate on the Four Last Things—Death, Judgment, Hell, and Heaven; but it is of especial advantage to meditate on Death, and to imagine ourselves expiring on the bed of sickness, with the Crucifix in our hands, and on the point of entering into eternity. But above all, to one that loves Jesus Christ, and is anxious always to increase in His love, no consideration is more efficacious than that of the Passion of the Redeemer. St. Francis of Sales calls Mount Calvary "the Mountain of Lovers." All the lovers of Jesus Christ love to abide on this Mountain, where no air is breathed but the air of Divine love. When we see a God dying for our love, and dying in order to gain our love (*He loved us and delivered himself up for us*), it is impossible for us not to love Him ardently. Such darts of love continually issue forth from the Wounds of Christ Crucified as pierce even hearts of stone. Oh, happy he who is ever going during life to the heights of Calvary! O blessed Mount! O lovely Mount! O beloved Mount! And who shall ever leave thee more! A Mount that sends forth flames to enkindle the souls that perseveringly abide upon thee!

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# Whit Monday

## Morning Meditation

### *THE LOVE OF JESUS IN THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT.*

Jesus, not wishing to separate Himself from us even in death, instituted the Most Blessed Sacrament in order to

remain with us therein until the end of the world. *Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world*—(Matt. xxviii. 20).

I.

Our most loving Redeemer, knowing that He must leave this earth and return to His Father as soon as He should have accomplished the work of our Redemption by His death, and seeing that His hour was near at hand —*Jesus knowing that his hour was come that he should pass out of this world to his father* (Jo. xiii. 1)—would not leave us orphans in this valley of tears. What, then, did He do? He instituted the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, in which He left us His whole Self. "No tongue," says St. Peter of Alcantara, "can express the greatness of the love of Jesus for our souls; and hence this Spouse, before He departed this life, in order that His absence might not be the occasion of our forgetting Him, left us as a memorial this Most Holy Sacrament, in which He might Himself remain with us, not being willing that any other pledge but Himself should remain to remind us of Him." Jesus, therefore, not wishing to separate Himself from us by His death, instituted this Sacrament of love, in order to remain with us until the end of the world: *Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world*—(Matt. xxviii. 20). Let us behold Him, therefore, as Faith teaches us, residing upon numberless altars,—shut up in so many prisons of love, that He may be found by all who seek Him. "But, O Lord," says St. Bernard, "this does not become Thy majesty." Jesus Christ answers: *It is sufficient that it accords with My love.*

O my beloved Jesus, O God Who lovest us with such great love, what more canst Thou do to make us, ungrateful sinners, love Thee? Oh, if men loved Thee, all the churches would be continually filled with devout people, prostrate on their faces, adoring and thanking Thee,

burning with Thy love at beholding Thee with the eyes of Faith hidden in a tabernacle! But no; men, forgetful of Thee and of Thy love, wait indeed upon a mortal man from whom they expect some perishable good, and leave Thee, my Lord, abandoned and alone. Oh, that I were able to make Thee amends for so much ingratitude by my own devotion!

II.

Those persons are tenderly affected who go to Jerusalem, and visit the place where the Word Incarnate was born, the hall where He was scourged, the Mount on which He died, and the Sepulchre in which He was buried; but how much greater ought our tenderness to be in visiting an altar on which Jesus is present in the Most Holy Sacrament? The Blessed John of Avila was accustomed to say, that there was no sanctuary so excellent and holy as a church in which Jesus was sacramentally present.

I am grieved, O my Jesus, that I have hitherto been like unto such, careless and forgetful of Thee. But for the future I will not be one of their number. I will devote myself to Thee and visit Thee as often as I am able. Inflame my heart with Thy holy love, that for the future I may live only to love and to please Thee. Thou deservest to be loved by the hearts of all. If at one time I despised Thee, I now desire to love Thee. My Jesus, Thou art my Love and my only Good—*my God and my All*. Most Holy Virgin Mary, obtain for me a great love of Jesus in the Holy Sacrament.

## Spiritual Reading

### *VISITING JESUS IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.*

Our holy Faith teaches us, and we are bound to believe that in the consecrated Host Jesus Christ is really present under the species of bread. But we must also understand that He is thus present on our altars as on a throne of love and mercy, to dispense graces and to show us the love He bears us, in wishing thus to dwell night and day hidden in our midst.

It is well known that the Holy Church instituted the Festival of Corpus Christi with a solemn Octave, and that she celebrates it with many processions, and frequent Exposition of the Most Holy Sacrament, that men may thereby be moved to gratefully acknowledge and honour this loving presence and dwelling of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar, by their devotions, thanksgivings, and the tender affections of their souls. O God, how many insults and outrages has not this admirable Redeemer had, and has He not daily to endure in this Sacrament on the part of those very men for whose love He remains upon our altars! Of this He indeed complained to His dear servant, St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, as the author of the *Book of Devotion to the Heart of Jesus* relates. One day, as she was in prayer before the Most Holy Sacrament, Jesus showed her His Heart on a throne of flames, crowned with thorns, and surmounted by a cross, and thus addressed her: "Behold this Heart which has loved men so much, and which has spared itself in nothing, and has even gone so far as to consume itself, thereby to show them Its love; but in return the greater part of men only show Me ingratitude by the irreverence, tepidity, sacrilege, and contempt, of which they make Me the object in this Sacrament of love; and that which I feel most acutely is, that hearts consecrated to Me treat Me thus." Jesus then expressed His wish,

that the first Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi should be dedicated as a particular festival in honour of His adorable Heart; and that on that day all souls who loved Him should endeavour by their homage, and by their affections to make amends for the insults men have offered Him in the Sacrament of the Altar. He at the same time promised abundant graces to all who should thus honour Him present in the Blessed Sacrament.

This Presence makes us understand what our Lord said of old by His Prophet, that His delights are to be with the children of men; for He knows not how to tear Himself from them, even when they abandon and despise Him. This also shows us how pleasing to the Heart of Jesus are all those souls who frequently visit Him and keep Him company in the churches in which He is present under the sacramental species. He desired St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi to visit Him in the Most Blessed Sacrament thirty-three times a day; and in this His beloved spouse faithfully obeyed Him, and in all her visits she approached as near as possible to the altar, as we read in her Life.

But let all those devout souls who often go to keep company with Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament speak —let them tell us of the gifts and inspirations they have received, of the flames of love which are there enkindled in their souls, and the Paradise they enjoy in the presence of this hidden God.

The servant of God, and great Sicilian missionary, Father Louis La Nouza, was, even in his youth and as a layman, so enamoured of Jesus Christ, that he seemed unable to tear himself from the presence of his beloved Lord. Such were the joys which he here experienced, that his director, to moderate his devotion, had to command him, in virtue of obedience, not to remain before the tabernacle for more than an hour. The time having elapsed, he showed in obeying that in tearing himself from the bosom of Jesus Christ, he had to do himself just such violence as a child that has to detach itself from its mother's breast in the very moment in which it is satiat-

ing itself with the utmost avidity. St. Aloysius also was forbidden to remain in the presence of the Most Blessed Sacrament, and as he passed before the Tabernacle, finding himself drawn, so to speak, by the sweet attractions of his Lord, and almost forced to remain there, he would with the greatest effort tear himself away, saying, in an excess of tender love : *Depart from me, O Lord, depart!* There it was also that St. Francis Xavier found refreshment in the midst of his many labours in India, for he employed his days in toiling for souls, and his nights he passed in the presence of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

## Evening Meditation

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## *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

### XI.—THE MEANS OF AVOIDING LUKEWARMNESS AND ATTAINING PERFECTION.

#### I.

The fourth means of perfection, and even of perseverance in the grace of God, is *frequently to receive Holy Communion*, of which we have often spoken, and often declared that a soul can do nothing more pleasing to Jesus Christ than to receive Him often in the Sacrament of the Altar. St. Teresa said : " There is no better help to perfection than frequent Communion. Oh, how admirably does the Lord bring on such a soul to perfection !" And she adds that ordinarily speaking, they who communicate most frequently are found further advanced in perfection; and that there is greater spirituality in those Religious Communities where frequent Communion is the custom. For this reason it is that, as we find declared in a decree of Innocent XI, in 1679, the Holy Fathers have so highly extolled, and so much promoted,

the practice of *frequent and even of daily Communion*. The Holy Communion, as the Council of Trent tells us, delivers us from daily faults, and preserves us from mortal sins. St. Bernard asserts that Communion represses the movements of anger and incontinence, which are the two passions that most frequently and most violently assail us. St. Thomas says that Communion defeats the suggestions of the devil. And finally St. John Chrysostom says that Communion pours into our souls a great inclination to virtue, and a promptitude to practise it; and at the same time imparts to us a great peace, by which the path of perfection is made very sweet and easy to us. Besides, there is no Sacrament so capable of kindling Divine love in souls as the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, in which Jesus Christ bestows on us His whole Self, in order to unite us all to Himself by means of holy love. Wherefore Blessed John of Avila said : " Whoever deters souls from frequent Communion does the work of the devil." Yes; for the devil has a great horror of this Sacrament, from which souls derive immense strength to advance in Divine love.

II.

But a proper preparation is requisite to communicate well. The first preparation, or, in other terms, the remote preparation, to be able to go to Communion daily, or several times in the week, is, (1) To keep free from all deliberate affection to sin, that is, to sin committed, as we say, with the eyes open. (2) The practice of much mental prayer. (3) The mortification of the senses and of the passions. St. Francis of Sales teaches as follows : " Whoever has overcome the greatest part of his bad inclinations, and has arrived at a notable degree of perfection, can communicate every day." The angelic Doctor, St. Thomas, says that anyone who knows by experience that his soul derives an increase of Divine love from Holy Communion, may communi-

cate daily. Hence Innocent XI, in the above-mentioned decree, said that the greater or less frequency of Holy Communion must rest on the decision of the Confessor, who ought to be guided in this matter by the profit which he sees accrue to the souls under his direction. In the next place, the proximate preparation for Communion is that which is made on the morning itself of Communion, for which there is need of at least half an hour's mental prayer.*

To reap also more abundant fruit from Communion, we must make a good thanksgiving. Blessed John of Avila said that the time after Communion is "a time to gain treasures of graces. St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi used to say that no time can be more calculated to inflame us with Divine love than the time immediately after our Communion. And St. Teresa says: "After Communion let us be careful not to lose so good an opportunity of negotiating with God. His Divine Majesty is not accustomed to pay badly for His lodging, if He meets with a good reception."

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# Whit Tuesday

## Morning Meditation

### *JESUS REMAINS ON OUR ALTARS THAT HE MAY BE FOUND BY ALL.*

St. Teresa used to say that in this world it is impossible for all subjects to speak with their king. But everyone who wishes can find Jesus, the King of Heaven, in the

*In connection with above paragraph read the Decree of the Sacred Congregation concerning frequent and daily Communion, page 299.

Blessed Sacrament, and may speak with Him without restraint.

I.

St. Teresa used to say that in this world it is impossible for all subjects to speak with their king. The most the poor can hope for is to convey what they have to say to him by means of some third person. But to speak with Thee, O King of Heaven, there is no need of any third person. Everyone who wishes may find Thee in the Holy Sacrament, and may speak to Thee without restraint. For this reason it is, says the same Saint, that Jesus has concealed His majesty under the appearance of bread,—to give us confidence, and to take away from us all fear of approaching Him. Ah! how does Jesus hourly exclaim from our altars: *Come to me all you who labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you*—(Matt. xi. 28). Come, He says to us—come, ye poor; come, ye infirm; come, ye afflicted; come, ye just and sinners, and you shall find in Me a remedy for all your losses and afflictions. Such is the desire of Jesus Christ to console all who have recourse to Him. He remains night and day upon our altars that He may be found by all, and may bestow His favours upon all.

O my Jesus, I could even die of grief when I think that hitherto I have loved creatures and my own gratification more than Thee, by turning my back upon Thee, my sovereign Good. But Thou wouldst not suffer me to be lost; Thou hast borne with me with so much patience, and, instead of chastising me, hast wounded my heart with so many darts of love that I can no longer resist Thy allurements, and have now given myself to Thee. I see that Thou wouldst have me all Thine. But since Thou desirest this, do Thou effect it, for it is Thou that must do it. Detach all my affections from myself and from creatures, and grant that I may seek no other but Thee, nor think of any other, nor speak of any but Thee, and that I may desire and sigh only to burn with Thy

love, to live and to die for Thee. O love of my Jesus, come and occupy my whole heart, and expel from it all love that is not for God. I love Thee, O Jesus, present in the Holy Sacrament. I love Thee, my Life, my Treasure, and my All. O Mary, pray for me, and make me belong entirely to Jesus.

II.

The Saints here in this world experienced such delight in remaining before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament that days and nights appeared to them but as moments. The Countess of Feria, having become a Poor Clare, was never wearied remaining in the choir in sight of the tabernacle. Being one day asked what she was doing so long before the Blessed Sacrament, she answered with surprise: "What was I doing before the Blessed Sacrament—what was I doing? I was thanking, loving, and asking!" St. Philip Neri, at the sight of the Blessed Sacrament, exclaimed: "Behold my Love! Behold all my Love!" Ah! if Jesus Christ were our whole love, our days and nights in His presence would also appear as moments.

From this day forward, O Jesus, I hope to be able to say always of Thee, when visiting Thee on the altar: "Behold my Love! Behold all my Love!" Yes, my beloved Redeemer, I desire to love no other but Thee; I desire only Thee, Who art the only love of my soul.

## Spiritual Reading

### *VISITING JESUS IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.*

St. John Regis was accustomed frequently to visit Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Sometimes, however, finding the church closed, he satisfied his longings by remaining on his knees outside the door, exposed to the rain and

cold, that, at least at a distance, he might pay his homage to his Comforter concealed under the sacramental veils. St. Francis of Assisi used to converse concerning all his labours and undertakings with Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament. But tender, perhaps, beyond all others was the devotion of St. Wenceslaus, Duke of Bohemia, towards the Most Holy Sacrament. This holy king was so enamoured of the presence of Jesus that he not only gathered the wheat and grapes, and made the hosts and wine with his own hands, and then gave them to be used in the Holy Sacrifice, but he used, even during the winter, to go at night to visit the church in which the Blessed Sacrament was kept. These Visits enkindled in his soul such flames of divine love that the ardour imparted itself even to his body, and took from the snow on which he walked its wonted cold. It is related that the servant who accompanied him, and had to walk on the snow, suffered much from the cold. The holy king, on perceiving this, was moved to compassion, and commanded him to follow him, and to step only in his footmarks. He did so, and never afterwards felt the cold.

In the *Visits*, you will read other examples of the tender affection with which souls inflamed with the love of God longed to remain in the presence of the Most Blessed Sacrament. You will find that all the Saints were enamoured of this most sweet devotion, and, indeed, it is not possible to find on earth a more precious gem, or a treasure more worthy of all our love, than Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament. Certainly, amongst all devotions, that of receiving the Sacraments alone excepted, adoring Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament holds first place. It is the most pleasing to God and the most useful to ourselves. Do not then, O devout soul, refuse to begin this devotion; leave the conversation of men, and remain each day, from this time forward, for half, or at least a quarter of an hour, in some church in the presence of Jesus Christ under the sacramental species. *Taste and see how sweet is the Lord.* Make a trial, and by experience you will learn the great benefit you will derive from this devotion.

Be assured that the time thus spent with devotion before this most Divine Sacrament will be the most profitable to you in life, and the source of your greatest consolation in death and for eternity. And you should know that in a quarter of an hour's prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, you may gain more than in all the other spiritual exercises of the day. It is true that in every place God hears the petitions of those who pray to Him, having promised to do so. *Ask and you shall receive*—(Jo. xvi. 24). Yet *The Disciple* tells us that Jesus dispenses His graces in greatest abundance to those who visit Him in the Most Blessed Sacrament. Blessed Henry Suso also used to say that Jesus Christ hears the prayers of the faithful more graciously in the Sacrament of the Altar than elsewhere. And where, indeed, did holy souls make their most beautiful resolutions, but prostrate before the Most Holy Sacrament? Who knows but that you also may one day, in the presence of the Tabernacle, make the resolution to give yourself entirely to God? In this little book I feel myself bound, at least out of gratitude to my Jesus in the Holy Sacrament, to declare, that through means of this devotion of visiting Him, which I practised, though with so much tepidity and in so imperfect a manner, I abandoned the world, in which, unfortunately, I lived until I was six-and-twenty years of age. Fortunate indeed will you be if you can detach yourself from it at an earlier period and give yourself without reserve to that Lord Who has given Himself without reserve to you. I repeat, blessed indeed you will be, not only in eternity, but even in this life. . . Oh, how sweet a joy it is to remain with faith and tender devotion before an altar, and converse familiarly with Jesus Christ, Who is there with the express purpose of listening to and graciously hearing those who come to visit Him; to ask His pardon for the displeasure we have caused Him; to put before Him our wants, as a friend to a friend in whom he places all his confidence; to ask Him for His graces, for His love, for His Kingdom. But, above all, oh, what a paradise it is there to remain

making acts of love towards that Lord Who is in the Tabernacle burning with love for us and praying to His Eternal Father for our welfare. In truth it is love that keeps Him there thus hidden and unknown, even though He is despised by ungrateful souls. But why say more? *Taste and see.*

## Evening Meditation

### *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

#### XII.—THE MEANS OF AVOIDING LUKEWARMNESS AND ATTAINING PERFECTION.

I.

There are certain pusillanimous souls, who, on being exhorted to communicate more frequently, reply: "But I am not worthy." But, my child, do you not know, that the more you refrain from Communion, the more unworthy you become? Because, deprived of Holy Communion you will have less strength, and will commit many faults. Well, then, obey your director and be guided by him: faults do not forbid Holy Communion, when they are not committed with full will; besides, among your failings the greatest is not to submit to what your spiritual father says to you.

"But in my past life I was very bad." And I reply, that you must know, that he who is weakest has most need of the physician and of medicine. Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is our Physician and Medicine as well. St. Ambrose said: "I, who am always sinning, have always need of medicine." You will then say, perhaps, "But my confessor does not tell me to communicate oftener." If, then, he does not tell you to do so, ask him the permission to communicate oftener. Should he deny you, obey him; but in the meantime,

make him the request. "It would seem pride." It would be pride if you were to wish to communicate against his will, but not when you ask his consent with humility.

II.

This heavenly Bread requires to be hungered for. Jesus loves to be desired, says a devout author, *sitit sitiri*, "He thirsts to be thirsted for." And what a thought is this: "To-day I have communicated, and to-morrow I am to communicate." Oh, how such a reflection keeps the soul attentive to avoid all defects and to do the will of God! "But I have no devotion." If you mean sensible devotion, it is not necessary, neither does God always grant it even to His most beloved souls: it is enough for you to have the devotion of a will determined to belong wholly to God, and to make progress in His Divine love. John Gerson says that he who abstains from Communion because he does not feel that devotion which he would like to feel, acts like a man who does not approach the fire because he does not feel warm.

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# Wednesday—Ember Day

## Morning Meditation

### *THE GREAT GIFT OF JESUS IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.*

God is Omnipotent; but after He has given Himself to us in the Blessed Sacrament He has no greater gift to give us. O wonderful prodigy of Divine love!

I.

The love of Jesus was not satisfied with His shedding His Blood and laying down His life for us in the midst of ignominies and torments, in order to make known His affection for us; but, moreover, to oblige us the more to love Him, on the night before His death, He would leave us His whole Self to be our Food in the Holy Eucharist. God is omnipotent, but, having given Himself to us in this Sacrament, He has nothing more to give. The Council of Trent says that Jesus, in giving Himself to us in the Holy Communion, pours out upon us all the riches of His infinite love. *He pours out, as it were, the riches of His love towards men.*

O my dear Jesus, what more canst Thou do to make us love Thee? Oh! make us sensible of the excess of Thy love in reducing Thyself to Food in order to be united with us sinners. Thou, then, my Redeemer, hast had so much love for me as not to refuse to give me Thy whole Self frequently in the Holy Communion, and I have many times had the baseness to expel Thee from my soul! But Thou wilt not despise a contrite and humble heart. Thou didst become Man for my sake; Thou didst die for me; and Thou hast given me Thyself to be my Food; and what more remains for Thee to do to gain my love? Oh! that I might die with grief as often as I remember having despised Thy graces! I am sorry with my whole heart for having offended Thee. I love Thee, O infinite Goodness! I love Thee, O infinite Love!

II.

How honoured would that vassal esteem himself, says St. Francis of Sales, to whom his prince at table should offer a portion from his own dish, or of his own very flesh! Jesus, in the Holy Communion, gives us for our Food, not a portion from His own table, nor a part of His sacred Flesh, but His whole Body: *Take and eat—this is my body.* And at the same time that He gives us

His Body He gives us also with it, His Soul and Divinity; so that, as St. Chrysostom says, our Lord, in giving us Himself in the Holy Eucharist, gives us all that He has, and nothing more remains that He can give to us. O wonderful prodigy of love! God, Who is the Lord of all, makes Himself entirely ours!

I desire nothing but to love Thee, O my Jesus, and I fear nothing but to live without loving Thee. My beloved Jesus, do not refuse to come again into my soul. Come, for I would rather die a thousand deaths than drive Thee from me any more; and I will do all in my power to please Thee. Come, and inflame my whole soul with Thy holy love. Grant that I may forget all things else to think only of Thee, and to aspire after Thee alone, my sovereign and only Good. O Mary, my Mother, pray for me, and by thy holy prayers make me grateful for the great love of Jesus towards me.

## Spiritual Reading

### *THE VISIT TO MARY.*

And now as to the Visit to the Most Blessed Virgin, the opinion of St. Bernard is well known and commonly accepted: namely, that God dispenses no graces otherwise than through the hands of Mary: "God wills that we should receive nothing that does not pass through Mary's hands." Hence Father Suarez declares that it is now the sentiment of the universal Church, that the intercession of Mary is not only useful, but even necessary to obtain graces. And we may remark that the Church gives us strong grounds for this belief, by applying the words of the Sacred Scripture to Mary, and making her say: *In me is all hope of life and of virtue. Come over to me all ye that desire me*—(Ecclus. xxiv. 25, 26). Let all come to me; for I am the hope of all that you can desire.

Hence she adds : *Blessed is the man that heareth me, and that watcheth daily at my gates, and waiteth at the posts of my doors*—(Prov. viii. 34). Blessed is he who is diligent in coming every day to the door of my powerful intercession, for by finding me he will find life and eternal salvation : *He that shall find me shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord*—(Prov. viii. 35). Hence it is not without reason that the Church wills that we should call Mary our common hope, by saluting her with the words : " Hail, our hope !"

" Let us then," says St. Bernard (who went so far as to style Mary "the whole ground of his hope"), "seek for graces, and seek them through Mary." For, as St. Antoninus says, if we ask for graces without her intercession, we shall be only making an effort to fly without wings, and obtain nothing. " He who asks without her as his guide, attempts to fly without wings."

In Father Auriemma's little book, *Affetti Scambievoli*, we read of innumerable favours granted by the Mother of God to those who practised this most profitable devotion of often visiting her in her churches or before her image.

Do you also, then, be careful to ever join to your daily visit to the Most Blessed Sacrament a visit to the most holy Virgin Mary in some church, or at least before a devout image of her in your own house. St. Andrew of Crete says, that Mary always bestows great gifts on those who offer her even the least act of homage.

### *Spiritual Communion during Visit.*

As it is suggested in the following visits to the Most Blessed Sacrament to make a *Spiritual Communion* after each, it will be well to explain what a Spiritual Communion is, and the great advantages of making it. A *Spiritual Communion*, according to St. Thomas, consists in an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament, and in lovingly embracing Him as if we had actually received Him.

How pleasing Spiritual Communions are to God, and how many graces He bestows through their means, was manifested by Our Lord Himself to Sister Paula Maresca, the foundress of the Convent of St. Catherine of Sienna, in Naples. It is related in her Life that our Lord showed her two precious vessels, one of gold, another of silver. He then told her that in the gold vessel He preserved her Sacramental Communions, and in the silver her *Spiritual Communions*. He also told Blessed Jane of the Cross that each time she communicated spiritually she received a grace like in kind to that which she received when she really communicated. But for us it will suffice to know that the holy Council of Trent greatly praises *Spiritual Communion*, and encourages the faithful to practise it.

Hence devout souls are accustomed often to make use of this holy exercise of *Spiritual Communion*. Blessed Agatha of the Cross did so two hundred times a day. Father Peter Faber, the first companion of St. Ignatius, used to say that it was of the highest utility to make Spiritual Communions, in order to receive the Sacramental Communion well.

All, therefore, who desire to advance in the love of Jesus Christ are exhorted to make a Spiritual Communion at least once in every visit that they pay to the Most Blessed Sacrament, and once at every Mass that they hear. Better still on these occasions to repeat the Spiritual Communions three times; that is to say, at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end. This devotion is far more profitable than some suppose, and at the same time nothing can be easier to practise. The above-named Jane of the Cross used to say that a Spiritual Communion can be made without any one remarking it, without being fasting, without the permission of our director, and that we can make it any time we please; an act of love does all.

## Evening Meditation

### *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

XIII.—THE MEANS OF AVOIDING LUKEWARMNESS AND ATTAINING PERFECTION.

I.

Alas, my God, how many souls, for want of applying themselves to lead a life of greater recollection and more detachment from earthly things, care not to receive Holy Communion! And this is the true cause of their not wishing to communicate frequently. They are well aware that to wish always to appear, to dress with vanity, to be fond of nice eating and drinking, of bodily comforts, of conversations and amusements, does not harmonise with frequent Communion; they know that more prayer is required, more mortification, as well internal as external, more seclusion; and on this account they are ashamed to approach the altar more frequently. Without doubt, such souls are right to refrain from frequent Communion as long as they find themselves in that unhappy state of lukewarmness; but whoever is called to a more perfect life should lay aside this lukewarmness, if he would not greatly risk his eternal salvation.

II.

It will be found likewise to contribute very much to keep fervour alive in the soul often to make a Spiritual Communion, so much recommended by the Council of Trent, which exhorts all the faithful to practise it. The Spiritual Communion, as St. Thomas says, consists in an ardent desire to receive Jesus Christ in the Holy Sacrament; and therefore the Saints were careful to make

it several times in the day. The method of making it is this : " My Jesus, I believe that Thou art really present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love Thee and I desire Thee; come into my soul. I embrace Thee; and I beseech Thee never to allow me to be separated from Thee again." Or more briefly, thus : " My Jesus, come to me; I desire Thee; I embrace Thee; let us remain ever united together." This Spiritual Communion may be practised several times a day : when we make our prayer, when we make our Visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and especially when we assist at Mass at the moment of the priest's Communion. The Dominican Sister, Blessed Angela of the Cross, said : " If my confessor had not taught me this method of communicating spiritually several times a day, I should not have trusted myself to live."

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# Thursday—Whit Week

## Morning Meditation

### *THE GREAT LOVE JESUS HAS SHOWN US IN GIVING US THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.*

St. Paul says that God, by becoming Man, showed the world how far His goodness and kindness towards us went. But by giving Himself to us in the Blessed Sacrament He makes us know the depths of the tenderness of His love towards us. Does it not, says St. Augustine, seem madness—Jesus Christ to say to us : *Eat my flesh; drink my blood?*

I.

*Jesus, knowing that his hour was come, that he should pass out of this world to the Father; having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them unto the end* —(Jo. xiii. 1). Jesus, knowing that the time of His death was near, desired to leave us the strongest pledge of His love for us, and this was the gift of the Blessed Sacrament : *He loved them to the end*—which St. Chrysostom explains : " He loved them with extreme love." He, therefore, loved men with the greatest love He could possibly entertain towards them by giving them His whole Self. But when was it that Jesus instituted this great Sacrament? The night before His death. *The Lord Jesus*, says the Apostle, *the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, broke and said: Take ye and eat—this is my body*—(1 Cor. xi. 23, 24). While men were preparing to put Him to death, He was pleased to give them this last proof of His love.

O infinite love of Jesus, Thou art worthy of being loved with an infinite love ! Thou, my Lord, hast loved man so much, and how is it that man loves Thee so little? What more couldst Thou do to make him love Thee? O my Jesus, Thou art most amiable and loving; make Thyself known, make Thyself loved. When shall I ever love Thee as Thou hast loved me? Discover to me more and more the greatness of Thy bounty, that I may always burn more and more with Thy love and always seek to please Thee.

II.

The marks of affection which are shown to us by our friends at the time of their death remain more deeply impressed on our hearts; and for this reason did Jesus choose to bestow Himself upon us in the Blessed Sacrament, a little before His death. Well, therefore, might St. Thomas call this Sacrament " the Sacrament of love and pledge of tenderest affection"; and St. Ber-

nard, " the love of loves"—" *amor amorum*"—because Jesus Christ in this Sacrament unites and comprises all the other marks of His love towards us. Hence St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, speaking of the day on which Jesus instituted this Sacrament, calls it " the day of love."

O Beloved of my soul, oh! that I had always loved Thee! Alas! there was a time when I not only did not love Thee, but even despised Thy graces and Thy love. I am consoled with the sorrow I feel for having done so, and I hope for pardon through Thy promise to forgive those who repent. To Thee, my Saviour, do I direct all my affections; help me, through the merits of Thy Passion, to love Thee with my whole strength. O that I could die for Thee, as Thou hast died for me! Holy Mary, Mother of God, obtain for me the grace of loving henceforward God alone.

## Spiritual Reading

### *CORAM SANCTISSIMO.**

*Introductory Prayer to be said before each Visit.*

My Lord Jesus Christ, Who for the love which Thou bearest to men, remainest night and day in this Sacrament full of compassion and of love, awaiting, calling, and welcoming all who come to visit Thee; I believe that Thou art present in the Sacrament of the Altar. I adore Thee from the abyss of my nothingness, and I thank Thee for all the graces Thou hast bestowed upon me, and in particular for having given me Thyself in this Sacrament, for having given me Thy most holy Mother Mary for my advocate, and for having called me to visit

*These Readings can be made in one's own home, but the best place of all is in some church or oratory—*Coram Sanctissimo*—before the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Thee in this church. I now salute Thy most loving Heart : and this for three ends :

I. In thanksgiving for this great gift;

II. To make amends to Thee for all the outrages which Thou receivest in this Sacrament from all Thine enemies;

III. I intend by this visit to adore Thee in all the places on earth in which Thou art present in this Sacrament, and in which Thou art the least revered and the most abandoned.

My Jesus, I love Thee with my whole heart. I grieve for having hitherto so many times offended Thine infinite Goodness. I purpose by Thy grace never more to offend Thee for the time to come; and now, miserable and unworthy though I am, I consecrate myself to Thee without reserve; I give Thee and renounce my entire will, my affections, my desires, and all that I possess. From henceforward do Thou dispose of me and of all that I have as Thou pleasest. All that I ask of Thee and desire is Thy holy love, final perseverance, and the perfect accomplishment of Thy will. I recommend to Thee the souls in Purgatory; but especially those who had the greatest devotion to the Most Blessed Sacrament and to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary. I also recommend to Thee all poor sinners. In fine, my dear Saviour, I unite all my affections with the affections of Thy most loving Heart; and I offer them, thus united, to Thy Eternal Father, and beseech Him in Thy Name to vouchsafe, for Thy love, to accept and grant them.

(*Indulgence of* 300 *days each time; Plenary once a month*).

### FIRST VISIT.

Behold the source of every good, Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament, Who says, *If any man thirst let him come to me*—(Jo. vii. 37). Oh, what torrents of grace

have the Saints drawn from the fountain of the Most Blessed Sacrament! For there Jesus dispenses all the merits of His Passion, as it was foretold by the Prophet: *You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains*—(Is. xii. 3). The Countess of Feria, that illustrious disciple of the Blessed John of Avila, afterwards a Poor Clare, and surnamed the spouse of the Most Blessed Sacrament, from her long and frequent visits to It, on being asked how she employed the many hours thus passed in the presence of the Holy of Holies, replied: "I could remain there for all eternity. And is not the very Essence of God, which will be the food of the blessed, there present? Good God! Am I asked what I do in His presence? Why am I not rather asked, what is not done there? We love, we praise, we give thanks, we ask. What does a poor man do in the presence of one who is rich? What does a sick man do in the presence of his physician? What does a man do who is parched with thirst in the presence of a limpid fountain? What is the occupation of one who is starving, and is placed before a well-supplied table?"

O my most amiable, most sweet, most beloved Jesus, my Life, my Hope, my Treasure, the only Love of my soul, oh, what has it cost Thee to remain thus with us in this Sacrament! Thou hadst to die, that Thou mightest dwell amongst us on our altars; and then how many insults hast Thou not had to endure in this Sacrament, in order to aid us by Thy presence! Thy love, and the desire which Thou hast to be loved by us, have conquered all.

Come, then, O Lord, come and take possession of my heart; close its doors for ever, that henceforward no creature may enter to divide the love which is due to Thee, and which it is my ardent desire to bestow all on Thee. Do Thou alone, my dear Redeemer, rule me; do Thou alone possess my whole being; and if ever I do not obey Thee perfectly, chastise me with rigour that henceforward I may be more watchful to please Thee as Thou willest. Grant that I may no longer seek for any

other pleasure than that of giving Thee pleasure : that all my delight may be to visit Thee often on Thy altars; to entertain myself with Thee, and to receive Thee in Holy Communion. Let all who will seek other treasures : the only treasure that I love, the only one that I desire, is the Treasure of Thy love; for this only will I plead at the foot of the altar. Do Thou make me forget myself, that thus I may remember only Thy goodness. Blessed Seraphim, I envy you, not for your glory, but for the love which you bear to your God and mine; oh, do you teach me what I must do to love Him, and to please Him.

*Ejac.* My Jesus, I will love Thee only; Thee only do I desire to please.

*A Spiritual Communion here follows for which an Indulgence of* 60 *days is granted by the Church* :—

### An Act of Spiritual Communion.

My Jesus, I believe that Thou art truly present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love Thee above all things, and I desire to possess Thee within my soul. Since I am unable now to receive Thee *sacramentally*, come at least *spiritually* into my heart. I embrace Thee as already there, and unite myself wholly to Thee; never permit me to be separated from Thee.

### Visit to Mary.

In our Mother Mary we have another fountain which is indeed fruitful for us. She is so rich in good things and in graces, says St. Bernard, that there is no one in the world who does not participate in them : " Of her fulness we have all received." The Most Blessed Virgin Mary was filled by God with grace, and as such was saluted by the Angel, *Hail, full of grace!*—(Luke i. 28), not for herself alone, but also for us. St. Peter Chrysologus adds, that she received that great abyss of grace, that

she might afterwards impart it to all who were devout to her : " The Blessed Virgin received this grace, that she might give in return salvation to all."

*Ejac. Prayer.* Cause of our joy, pray for us.

*Concluding Prayer.*

Most holy Immaculate Virgin and my Mother Mary, to thee, who art the Mother of my Lord, and Queen of the world, the advocate, the hope, the refuge of sinners, I have recourse to-day—I, who am the most miserable of all. I render thee my most humble homage, O great Queen, and I thank thee for all the graces thou hast conferred on me until now, particularly for having delivered me from hell, which I have so often deserved. I love thee, O most amiable Lady; and for the love which I bear thee, I promise to serve thee always, and to do all in my power to make others love thee also. I place in thee all my hopes; I confide my salvation to thy care. Accept me for thy servant, and receive me under thy mantle, O Mother of Mercy. And since thou art so powerful with God, deliver me from all temptations, or rather obtain for me the strength to triumph over them until death. Of thee I ask a perfect love of Jesus Christ. From thee I hope to die a good death. O my Mother, for the love which thou bearest to God, I beseech thee to help me at all times, but especially at the last moment of my life. Leave me not, I beseech thee, until thou seest me safe in Heaven, blessing thee, and singing thy mercies for all eternity.

Amen. So I hope. So may it be.

*Indulgence of* 300 *days for above Prayer.*

## Evening Meditation

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## *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

### XIV.—THE MEANS OF AVOIDING LUKEWARMNESS AND ATTAINING PERFECTION.

I.

The fifth and most necessary means for the spiritual life, and for obtaining the love of Jesus Christ is *prayer of petition.* In the first place, I say that by this means God convinces us of the great love He bears us. What greater proof of affection can a person give to a friend than to say to him, "My friend, ask anything you like of me, and I will give it to you"? Now that is precisely what our Lord says to us: *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find*—(Luke xi. 9). Wherefore prayer is called all-powerful with God to obtain every blessing: "Prayer, though it is only one, can effect all things," as Theodoret says; whoever prays obtains from God whatever he chooses. The words of David are beautiful: *Blessed be God who hath not turned away my prayer nor his mercy from me*—(Ps. lxv. 20). Commenting on this passage, St. Augustine says, "As long as thou seest thyself not failing in prayer, be assured that the Divine mercy will not fail thee either." And St. John Chrysostom: "We always obtain, even while we are still praying." When we pray to God, He grants us the grace we ask for, even before we have ended our petition. If, then, we are poor, let us blame only ourselves, since we are poor merely because we wish to be poor, and so we are undeserving of pity. What sympathy can there be for a beggar, who, having a very rich master, and one most desirous to provide him with everything, if he will only ask for it, nevertheless chooses still to continue in his poverty rather than ask for what

he wants? *Behold*, says the Apostle, *our God, rich unto all that call upon him*—(Rom. x. 12).

II.

Humble prayer, then, obtains all from God; but we must be persuaded at the same time, that if it be useful it is no less necessary for our salvation. It is certain that we absolutely require the Divine assistance, in order to overcome temptations; and sometimes, in certain more violent assaults, the sufficient grace which God gives to all, might possibly enable us to resist them; but on account of our inclination to evil, it will not ordinarily be sufficient in these violent temptations, and we shall then stand in need of a special grace. Whoever prays obtains this grace; but whoever prays not obtains it not, and is lost. And this is more especially the case with regard to the grace of *final perseverance*, of dying in the grace of God, which is the grace absolutely necessary for our salvation, and without which we should be lost for ever. St. Augustine says of this grace, that God only bestows it on those who pray. And this is the reason why so few are saved, because few indeed are mindful to beg of God this grace of perseverance.

# Friday- Ember Day

## Morning Meditation

### *THE UNION OF THE SOUL WITH JESUS IN HOLY COMMUNION.*

Jesus was not satisfied with uniting Himself to our human nature, He would, by means of the Most Blessed Sacrament, find a way of uniting Himself also to each one of us, so as to become wholly his who would receive Him. *He that eateth my flesh abideth in me and I in him* —(Jo. vi. 57).

I.

St. Dionysius says, that the principal effect of love is to tend to union. For this end did Jesus institute the Holy Communion,—to unite Himself entirely with our souls. He had given Himself to us as our Teacher, our Model, and Victim; it remained to Him to give Himself to us as our Food—to become one with us, as food becomes the same with the person who eats it; and this He did by instituting the Holy Sacrament of love. "The last degree of His love," says St. Bernardine of Sienna, "was His giving Himself to us to be our Food; because He gave Himself to be completely united with us, as food is united with him who takes it." Thus Jesus Christ was not satisfied with uniting Himself to our human nature, He was desirous by this Sacrament to devise a means of uniting Himself to each one of us individually, so as to

become wholly his who should receive Him. Hence St. Francis of Sales says : " In no one action can our Blessed Saviour be considered more tender or more loving than in this, in which He, as it were, annihilates Himself, and reduces Himself to Food to penetrate to the hearts of all the faithful."

O my Jesus, this is what I desire and seek from Thee in the Holy Communion—to hear from Thee : " We will consider ourselves as united for ever, never more to be separated." I know that Thou wilt not separate Thyself from me if I do not separate myself from Thee. But this is my fear—lest I should ever again separate myself from Thee as I have done before. Permit it not, my beloved Redeemer. " Suffer me not to be separated from Thee."

II.

Because Jesus Christ ardently loved us, He was desirous of being united with us in the Holy Eucharist, that we might become the same thing with Him; thus speaks St. Chrysostom : " He mingled Himself with us, that He might become one with us; for this belongs to ardent affection." Thou wast desirous, O God of love, that our hearts and Thine should form but one heart, says St. Laurence Justinian. And Jesus Himself meant this when He said : *He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me and I in him*—(Jo. vi. 57). He, therefore, who communicates, abides in Jesus, and Jesus abides in him; and this union is not a mere union of affections, but a true and real union. As two pieces of wax, says St. Cyril of Alexandria, are melted together, and united together, so he who communicates and Jesus Christ, Whom he receives, become one and the same thing. Let us therefore imagine, when we communicate, that Jesus Christ says to us, as He did to His beloved servant, Margaret of Ypres : " Behold, daughter, the

beautiful union that exists between us : love Me, and we will consider ourselves as united for ever, and will never separate."

Through the merits of Thy death, O my Jesus, let me die now rather than ever be separated again from Thee. I repeat, and give me grace ever to repeat : Suffer me not to be separated from Thee ! Suffer me not to be separated from Thee ! O God of my soul, I love Thee, I love Thee, and desire always to love Thee. I protest before Heaven and earth that I desire nothing but Thee. O my Jesus hear me; I desire only Thee. O Mary, Mother of mercy, pray for me, and obtain for me never to separate myself from Jesus, and to love only Jesus.

## Spiritual Reading

### *CORAM SANCTISSIMO.*

SECOND VISIT.

The devout Father Nieremberg says, that bread being a food which is consumed by eating, and which keeps when preserved for use, Jesus was pleased to dwell on earth under its species, that He might thus not only be consumed by uniting Himself to the souls of His lovers, by means of the Holy Communion, but also that He might be preserved in the Tabernacle, and be present with us, and thus remind us of the love He bears us. St. Paul says : *He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant*—(Philipp. ii. 7). But what must we say when we see Him *taking the form of bread*? "No tongue can suffice," says St. Peter of Alcantara, "to proclaim the greatness of the love Jesus bears to souls in the state of grace. In order, therefore, that His absence might not be to them an occasion of forgetting Him, this most sweet Spouse, when He was pleased to quit

this life, left as a memorial this Most Blessed Sacrament, in which He Himself remains. He did not wish that between these souls and Himself any other pledge but Himself should remain, whereby to keep alive their remembrance of Him."

Since, then, my Jesus, Thou art enclosed in this Tabernacle to receive the supplications of miserable creatures who come to seek an audience of Thee, listen this day to the petition addressed to Thee by the most ungrateful sinner on earth. I come repentant to Thy feet, for I know the evil which I have committed in giving Thee displeasure. My first prayer and desire, then, is that Thou wilt be pleased to pardon me all the sins I have committed against Thee. Ah, my God, would that I had never offended Thee! After this I must tell Thee my next desire. Now that I have found out Thy sovereign goodness, I have become enamoured of Thee; I feel an ardent desire to love Thee and to please Thee; but I have not the strength to do this unless Thou helpest me. Manifest, O great Lord, Thy supreme power and Thine immense goodness to the whole court of Heaven; change me from a great rebel, such as I have hitherto been to Thee, into a great lover of Thee. Thou canst do it, and I know that such is Thy will; supply all that is wanting in me, that thus I may be enabled to love Thee much—at least that I may love Thee as much as I have offended Thee. I love Thee, my Jesus; I love Thee above all things; I love Thee more than my life—my God, my Love, my All!

*Ejac.* My God and my All!

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION as above, page 86.

## VISIT TO MARY.

*Let us go with confidence to the throne of grace; that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid*

—(Heb. iv. 16). St. Antoninus says, that Mary is this throne, from which God dispenses all graces.

O most amiable Queen, since thou hast so great a desire to help sinners, behold a great sinner who has recourse to thee; help me much, and help me without delay.

*Ejac.* Sole refuge of sinners, have mercy on me.

Concluding Prayer as on page 87.

## Evening Meditation

### *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

XV.—THE MEANS OF AVOIDING LUKEWARMNESS AND ATTAINING PERFECTION.

I.

The holy Fathers say, that prayer is necessary for us, not merely as a *necessity of precept* (so that divines say, that he who neglects for a month to recommend to God the affair of his salvation is not exempt from mortal sin), but also as a *necessity of means*, which is as much as to say, that whoever does not pray cannot possibly be saved. And the reason of it is, in short, because we cannot obtain eternal salvation without the help of Divine grace, and this grace Almighty God only accords to those who pray. And because temptations, and the dangers of falling into God's displeasure, continually beset us, so ought our prayers to be continual. Hence St. Thomas declares that continual prayer is necessary for a man to save himself : " Unceasing prayer is necessary to man that he may enter Heaven." And Jesus Christ Himself had already said the same thing : *We ought always to pray, and not to faint*—(Luke xviii. 1). And

afterwards the Apostle : *Pray without ceasing*—(Thess. v. 17). During the interval in which we shall cease to pray, the devil will conquer us. And though the grace of perseverance can in no wise be merited by us, as the Council of Trent teaches us, nevertheless St. Augustine says, " that in a certain sense we can merit it by prayer." The Lord wishes to dispense His grace to us, but He will be entreated first; nay more, as St. Gregory remarks, He wills to be importuned, and in a manner constrained by our prayers : " God wishes to be prayed to,—He wishes to be compelled—He wishes to be, as it were, vanquished by our importunity."

II.

Saint Mary Magdalen de Pazzi said : " When we ask graces of God, He not only hears us, but in a certain sense thanks us." Yes, because God, as the infinite Goodness, in wishing to pour out Himself upon others, has, so to speak, an infinite longing to distribute His gifts; but He wishes to be besought; hence it follows, that when He sees Himself entreated by a soul, He receives so much pleasure that in a certain sense He thanks the soul for it.

Well, then, if we wish to preserve ourselves in the grace of God till death, we must act the mendicant, and keep our lips ever open to beg for God's help, always repeating, " My Jesus, mercy ! Never let me be separated from Thee ! O Lord, come to my aid ! My God, assist me !" This was the unceasing prayer of the ancient Fathers of the desert : " Incline unto my aid, O God ! O Lord, make haste to help me ! O Lord, help me, and help me soon; for if Thou delayest Thy assistance, I shall fall and perish !" And this above all must be practised in the moment of temptation; he who acts otherwise is lost.

# Saturday—Ember Day

## Morning Meditation

### *THE DESIRE OF JESUS CHRIST TO BE UNITED WITH US IN HOLY COMMUNION.*

Oh, with what desire does Jesus Christ pant to come into our hearts in Holy Communion! *With desire have I desired to eat this pasch with you before I suffer* —(Luke xxii. 15). "This is the voice of most ardent charity"—(St. Laurence Justinian).

1.

*Jesus knowing that his hour was come*—(Jo. xiii. 1). This hour which Jesus called *his hour*, was the hour of that night on which He was to begin His Passion. But why did He call so dreadful an hour *his hour*? Because this was the hour for which He had sighed during His whole life; because He had resolved to bequeath to us in this hour the Holy Communion, by which He desired to become united with us whom He loved, and for whom He was soon to shed His Blood and lay down His life. Hear how He spoke that night to His disciples: *With desire have I desired to eat this pasch with you*: by which words He would signify His great wish and anxiety to unite Himself with us in the Holy Sacrament of love. *With desire have I desired.* "This," says St. Laurence Justinian, "is the voice of most ardent charity." Now, the same love which then burned in the Heart of Jesus

burns there still : and He gives the same invitation now to all which He gave then to His disciples to receive Him : *Take ye and eat, this is my body*—(Matt. xxvi. 26).

My adorable Jesus, Thou canst give no greater proof of love, to teach us how much Thou lovest us. Thou hast given Thy life for us : Thou hast bequeathed Thyself to us in the Holy Sacrament, that we may nourish ourselves with Thy sacred Flesh, and Thou art most desirous that we should receive Thee. How can we be sensible of all these efforts of Thy love and not burn with love of Thee? Begone, all ye earthly affections from my heart; it is you who hinder me from burning with love for Jesus, as He burns with love for me. And what other pledges of Thy love can I expect, O my Redeemer, than those which Thou hast already given me? Thou hast sacrificed Thy whole life for the love of me; Thou hast embraced for my sake the most bitter and ignominious death; Thou hast reduced Thyself for me almost to annihilation by becoming my Food in the Holy Eucharist, in order to give me Thy whole Self. Ah, Lord, grant that I may never more live ungrateful for such great goodness.

II.

To allure us to receive Him with affection and love, He promises Heaven to us : *If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever*—(Jo. vi. 52). And if we refuse to receive Him He threatens us with death : *Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood you shall not have life in you*—(Jo. vi. 54). These invitations, promises, and threats, all arise from the desire of Jesus Christ to be united with us in the Holy Communion through His love for us. Our Lord said to St. Mechtilde that the bee does not take the honey with more eagerness of delight, than He enters the souls that desire Him. Jesus because He loves us, desires that we should love Him; and because He desires us He would have us desire Him : "God thirsts to be thirsted after," says St. Gregory.

Happy the soul that approaches the Holy Communion with a great desire of being united to Jesus Christ.

I thank Thee, O God, for having given me time to bewail my past offences against Thee, and to love Thee during the remainder of my days. I am sorry, O my sovereign Good, for having hitherto so much despised Thy love. I love Thee, O infinite Goodness, I love Thee, O infinite Treasure. I love Thee, O infinite Love, Who art worthy to be loved with an infinite love. Help me, O Jesus, to cast out from my heart all affections which tend not to Thee, that from this day forward, I may neither desire, nor seek, nor love any other but Thee. My beloved Lord, grant that I may ever find Thee, grant that I may ever love Thee. Take Thou possession of my whole will, in order that I may never desire anything but what is pleasing to Thee. My God, my God, whom shall I love if I love not Thee, Who art all goodness! O Mary, my Mother, take me under thy protection, and obtain for me the purest love for Jesus.

## Spiritual Reading

### *CORAM SANCTISSIMO.*

THIRD VISIT.

*And my delights are to be with the children of men* —(Prov. viii. 31). Behold, our Jesus, Who, not satisfied with dying on earth for our love, is pleased even after His death to dwell with us in the Holy Sacrament, declaring that He finds His delights among men. "O men," exclaims St. Teresa, "how can you offend a God Who declares that it is with you that He finds His delights!" Jesus finds His delights with us, and shall we not find ours with Jesus? And we especially who have had the honour to dwell in His palace? How

greatly do those vassals esteem themselves honoured to whom the king assigns an abode in his own residence! Behold the palace of the King! It is this house in which we dwell with Jesus Christ. Let us, then, learn to thank Him for it, and to avail ourselves of it to converse with Jesus Christ.

Behold me, then, O my Lord and God, before this altar, on which Thou dost reside night and day for my sake. Thou art the Source of every good; Thou art the Healer of every ill; Thou art the Treasure of every poor creature. Behold now at Thy feet a sinner, who is of all others the poorest and most infirm, and who asks Thy mercy; have pity upon me! Now that I see Thee in this Sacrament, come down from Heaven upon earth only to do me good, I will not be disheartened at the sight of my misery. I praise Thee, I thank Thee, I love Thee; and if Thou willest that I should ask Thee for an alms, I will ask for this,—O listen to me: I desire never more to offend Thee and I desire that Thou shouldst give me light and grace to love Thee with all my strength. Lord I love Thee with all my soul; I love Thee with all my affections. Do Thou grant that I may thus speak with truth; and that I may speak in the same way during life and for all eternity. Most Holy Virgin Mary, my holy Patron Saints, ye Angels, and all ye Blessed Saints of Paradise, help me to love my most amiable God.

*Ejac.* O Good Shepherd, true Bread, Jesus, have mercy on us! Do Thou show us good things in the land of the living!

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION as above, page 86.

## VISIT TO MARY.

*Her bands are a healthful binding*—(Ecclus. vi. 31). The devout Pelbart says that devotion to Mary is a chain of predestination. Let us beseech our sovereign

Lady to bind us always more closely by the chains of love to confidence in her protection.

*Ejac.* O clement, O pious, O sweet Virgin Mary!

Concluding Prayer as on page 87.

## Evening Meditation

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### *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

XVI.—THE MEANS OF AVOIDING LUKEWARMNESS AND ATTAINING PERFECTION.

I.

And let us have great faith in prayer. God has promised to hear him that prays: *Ask, and you shall receive.* How can we doubt, says St. Augustine, since God has bound Himself by express promise, and cannot fail to grant us the favours we ask of Him? "By promising He has made Himself our debtor." In recommending ourselves to God, we must have a sure confidence that God hears us, and then we shall obtain whatever we want. Behold what Jesus Christ says: *All things, whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you*—(Mark xi. 24).

"But," some one may say, "I am a sinner, and do not deserve to be heard." But Jesus Christ says: *Every one that asketh, receiveth*—(Luke xi. 10). Every one, be he just or be he a sinner. St. Thomas teaches us that the efficacy of prayer to obtain grace does not depend on our merits, but on the mercy of God, Who has promised to hear everyone who prays to Him.

II.

And our Redeemer, in order to remove from us all fear when we pray, said : *Amen, amen, I say to you, if you shall ask the Father anything in my name he will give it you*—(Jo. xvi. 23). As though He would say : Sinners, you have no merits of your own to obtain graces, wherefore act in this manner; when you would obtain graces, ask them of My Father in My Name; that is, through My merits and through My love; and then ask as many as you choose, and they shall be granted to you. But let us mark well these words, "In my Name," which signify (as St. Thomas explains it), " in the Name of the Saviour"; or, in other words, that the graces which we ask must be graces which regard our eternal salvation; and consequently we must remark that the promise does not regard temporal favours; these our Lord grants when they are profitable for our eternal welfare; if they would prove otherwise, He refuses them. So that we should always ask for temporal favours on condition that they will benefit our soul. But should they be spiritual graces, then they require no condition; but with confidence, and a sure confidence, we should say : " Eternal Father, in the Name of Jesus Christ, deliver me from this temptation : grant me perseverance, grant me Thy love, grant me Heaven." We can likewise ask these graces of Jesus Christ in His own Name; that is, by His merits, since we have His promise also to this effect : *If you shall ask me anything in my name, that I will do*—(Jo. xiv. 14). And whilst we pray to God, let us not forget to recommend ourselves at the same time to Mary, the dispenser of graces. St. Bernard says that it is Almighty God Who bestows the graces; but He bestows them through the hands of Mary : " Let us seek grace, and let us seek it through Mary; because what she seeks she finds, and cannot be refused." If Mary prays for us, we are safe; for every petition of Mary is heard, and she can never meet with a repulse.

# First Sunday after Pentecost

## Morning Meditation

### *HOLY COMMUNION THE MEANS OF PERSEVERANCE IN DIVINE GRACE.*

St. Denis says that when Jesus Christ comes to a soul in Holy Communion, He brings with Him boundless treasures of grace; and therefore after Communion, we can truly say : Now all good things come to me together with it.

I.

When Jesus comes to the soul in the Holy Communion He brings with Him every good, every grace, and especially the grace of holy perseverance. The principal effect of the Holy Sacrament of the Altar is to nourish the soul that receives it with the Bread of Life, by imparting great strength to advance towards perfection, and to resist those enemies who seek to effect its eternal ruin. Hence Jesus Christ calls Himself in this Sacrament heavenly Bread : *I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever*—(Jo. vi. 51, 52). As earthly bread maintains the life of the body, so this heavenly Bread maintains the life of the soul by enabling it to persevere in the state of God's grace. Hence the Council of Trent teaches that the Holy Communion is " a medicine which frees us from daily faults and preserves us from mortal sins."

Oh, how miserable I am O Lord, bewailing my weak-

ness while at the same time I stay away from Thee! How can I resist my internal enemies without Thee, Who art my Strength? Had I approached Thee more frequently in the Holy Communion, I should not have been so frequently overcome by my enemies. For the future it shall not be so : *In thee, O Lord, have I hoped; let me not be confounded forever*—(Ps. xxx. 2). No, I will no more rely on my own strength, but will place my whole confidence in Thee, my Jesus, Who will give me strength to fall no more into sin.

II.

Innocent III says that Jesus delivers us by His Passion from sins committed, and by the Holy Eucharist from those which we might otherwise commit. Hence St. Bonaventure says that sinners should not stay away from Holy Communion because they have been sinners; but for this very reason should receive it more frequently, for " the more infirm a person is, the more does he stand in need of a physician."

I am weak, O my Jesus, but Thou by the Holy Communion wilt make me strong against all temptations —*I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me*— (Phil. iv. 13). Pardon me, O Jesus, all the injuries I have committed against Thee, for which I am sorry with my whole soul; I am resolved rather to die than wilfully offend Thee any more; and I trust in Thy Passion that Thou wilt help me to persevere in Thy grace to the end of my life. *In thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be confounded.* And with St. Bonaventure I will say the same to Thee, O Mary, my Mother : " In thee—that is, in thy holy intercession, O Blessed Lady, have I hoped; let me never be confounded for ever!"

## Spiritual Reading

### *CORAM SANCTISSIMO.*

FOURTH VISIT.

*Her conversation hath no bitterness, nor her company any tediousness*—(Wisd. viii. 16). Friends on earth find such pleasure in being together, that they lose entire days in each other's company; with Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament, those who love Him not, get weary. After her death, St. Teresa, who was already in Heaven, said to a nun: "Those who are in Heaven and those who are on earth should be one and the same in purity and in love; we enjoying, and you suffering; and that which we do in Heaven with the Divine Essence, you should do on earth with the Most Blessed Sacrament." Behold, then, our Paradise on earth—the Most Blessed Sacrament!

O Immaculate Lamb, sacrificed for us upon the Cross, remember that I am one of those souls Thou hast redeemed by so many sufferings and by Thy Death. Grant that Thou mayest be mine and that I may never lose Thee, since Thou has given Thyself to me, and givest Thyself every day, sacrificing Thyself for my love on the altar; and grant that I may be all Thine. I give myself to Thee without reserve, that Thou mayest dispose of me as Thou pleasest. I give Thee my will; chain it with the sweet bonds of Thy love, that it may forever be the slave of Thy most holy will. I wish no longer to live for the satisfaction of my desires, but only to please Thy goodness. Destroy in me all that does not please Thee; grant me the grace never to have any other thought than to please Thee, any other desire than that which Thou desirest. I love Thee, O my dear Saviour, with my whole heart; I love Thee because Thou desirest that I

should love Thee; I love Thee because Thou art indeed worthy of my love. I grieve that I love Thee not as much as Thou deservest. I desire, Lord, to die for Thy love; accept my desire, and give me Thy love. Amen.

*Ejac.* O good pleasure of my God, I sacrifice myself all to Thee!

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION as above, page 86.

### VISIT TO MARY.

Mary says: *I am the mother of fair love*—(Ecclus. xxiv. 24). That is to say, she is the Mother of that love which beautifies souls. St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi saw the Most Blessed Virgin Mary going about dispensing a sweet liquid, which was divine love. This gift is dispensed only by Mary; from Mary let us seek it.

*Ejac.* My Mother, my hope, make me belong wholly to Jesus.

CONCLUDING PRAYER as on page 87.

## Evening Meditation

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## *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

*"Charity is not puffed up."*

### XVII.—HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST IS NOT VAIN OF HIS OWN WORTH, BUT HUMBLES HIMSELF, AND IS GLAD TO BE HUMBLED.

I.

A proud person is like a balloon filled with air, which seems, indeed, great; but whose greatness in reality, is

nothing more than a little air; which, as soon as the balloon is opened is quickly dispersed. He who loves God is humble, and is not elated at seeing any worth in himself; because he knows that whatever he possesses is the gift of God, and that of himself he has only nothingness and sin; so that his knowledge of the Divine favours bestowed on him, humbles him more, for he is conscious of being so unworthy, and yet so favoured by God.

St. Teresa says, in speaking of the especial favours she received from God : " God does with me as they do with a house, which, when about to fall, they prop up with supports." When a soul receives a loving visit from God, and feels within herself an unwonted fervour of Divine love, accompanied with tears, or with a great tenderness of heart, let her beware of supposing that God so favours her in reward for some good action; but let her then humble herself the more, concluding that God caresses her in order that she may not forsake Him; otherwise, were she to make such favours the subject of vain complacency, imagining herself more privileged because she receives greater gifts from God than others. such a fault would induce God to deprive her of His favours. Two things are chiefly requisite for the stability of a house, the foundation and the roof : the foundation in us must be humility, in acknowledging ourselves good for nothing, and capable of nothing; and the roof is the Divine assistance, in which alone we ought to put all our trust.

II.

Whenever we behold ourselves unusually favoured by God, we must humble ourselves the more. When St. Teresa received any special favour, she used to strive to place before her eyes all the faults she had ever committed; and thus the Lord received her into closer union with Himself : the more a soul confesses herself undeserving of any favours, the more God enriches her with His graces. Thais, who was first a sinner and then a Saint,

humbled herself so profoundly before God, that she dared not mention His Name; so that she did not dare to say, "My God," but "My Creator, have mercy on me! *Plasmator meus, miserere mei.*" And St. Jerome writes that, in recompense for such humility, she saw a glorious throne prepared for her in Heaven. In the Life of St. Margaret of Cortona we read how, when our Lord visited her one day with greater tokens of tenderness and love, she exclaimed: "But, O Lord, have You, then, forgotten what I have been? Is it possible that You can repay all my outrages against You with such exquisite sweetness?" And God replied that when a soul loves Him and cordially repents of having offended Him, He forgets all her past infidelities; as, indeed, He formerly spoke by the mouth of Ezechiel: *But if the wicked do penance . . . I will not remember all his iniquities*—(Ezech. xviii. 21-22). And in proof of this, He showed her a high throne which He had prepared for her in Heaven in the midst of the Seraphim. Oh, that we could only well comprehend the value of humility! A single act of humility is worth more than all the riches of the universe.

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# Monday—First Week after Pentecost

## Morning Meditation

### *PREPARATION AND THANKSGIVING.*

The Saints derived great advantage from Holy Communion because they were most careful in preparing themselves for it. The fire immediately burns dry

wood, but not green wood, because it is not fit for burning.

I.

Cardinal Bona asks how it happens that so many souls after so many Communions make such little advancement in the ways of God? And he answers: "The fault is not in the Food, but in the dispositions of those who receive it." There is nothing wanting in the Holy Communion, but preparation is wanting on the part of those who receive it. The fire immediately burns dry wood, but not green wood, because it is not fit for burning. The Saints derived great advantage from Holy Communion because they were most careful in preparing themselves for it. There are two things which we should endeavour to acquire in preparing ourselves for Holy Communion. The first is detachment from creatures, by banishing from our hearts everything that is not of God and for God. Although the soul is in the state of grace, yet if the heart be taken up by any earthly affection, the less room will there be for Divine love. One day St. Gertrude asked our Lord what preparation He required of her for the Holy Communion; and Jesus answered: "I require no other of thee but that thou come to receive Me devoid of thyself." The second thing we should endeavour to acquire, in order to be prepared to reap great fruit from the Holy Communion, is a desire to receive Jesus Christ with a view to love Him much more for the future. Gerson says that at this banquet only those are filled who feel great hunger. Hence St. Francis of Sales writes that the principal intention of the soul in communicating should be to advance in the love of God. "He," says the Saint, "should be received for love, Who for love alone gives Himself to us." And on this account our Lord once said to St. Mechtilde: "When thou art about to communicate, desire all the love that any soul ever had for Me, and I

will receive thy love as though it were what thou wouldst have it to be."

O God of love, dost Thou so much desire to dispense Thy graces to us, and are we careless in seeking for them? How great will be our distress when we come to die, to think of this neglect, so pernicious to us! Forget, O Lord, what is past; for the future, with Thy holy assistance, I will prepare myself in a better manner, by being careful to detach my affections from everything that can hinder me from receiving all those graces Thou desirest to impart to me.

II.

Thanksgiving after Communion is also necessary. No prayers are so acceptable to God as those which we offer to Him after Communion. During this time we should employ ourselves in acts of love and petitions. The holy affections in which we then exercise ourselves have greater merit before God than those we offer to Him at other times, because they come before Him inflamed by the presence of Jesus Christ, Who has united Himself to our souls. And as to petitions, St. Teresa says that Jesus Christ after Communion remains in the soul as on a throne of grace, and says to her: *What wilt thou that I should do for thee?*—(Mark x. 51). I am come down from Heaven to bestow My graces upon thee: ask of Me what thou wilt, and as much as thou wilt, and thou shalt be heard. Oh! what treasures of grace are lost by those who offer but few prayers to God after Communion.

After Holy Communion, dear Jesus, I will endeavour, as far as I am able, to obtain Thy help to advance in Thy love. Do Thou give me grace to accomplish this. O my Jesus, how careless have I hitherto been in loving Thee! The time of life, which in Thy mercy Thou didst allot me, is the time to prepare myself for death, and to make amends for the offences I have committed against Thee. I desire to spend it all in bewailing my sins and in loving Thee. I love Thee, O Jesus, my

Love; I love Thee, my only Good; have pity on me and do not abandon me. And, O Blessed Virgin Mary, never cease to succour me by thy holy intercession.

## Spiritual Reading

### *CORAM SANCTISSIMO.*

#### Fifth Visit.

*The sparrow hath found herself a house, and the turtle a nest for herself, where she may lay her young ones: thy altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God!*—(Ps. lxxxiii. 4). The sparrow, says David, finds a dwelling in houses; turtle-doves in nests; but Thou, my King and my God, hast made Thyself a nest and found a dwelling on earth on our altars, that we might find Thee, and that Thou mightest dwell amongst us.

Lord, we cannot but say, that Thou art too much enamoured of men; Thou no longer knowest what to do to gain their love. But do Thou, my most amiable Jesus, give us the grace that we also may be passionately enamoured of Thee. It would indeed be unreasonable were we cold in our love towards a God Who loves us with such affection. Draw us to Thee by the sweet attractions of Thy love; make us understand the endearing claims which Thou hast on our love.

O infinite Majesty, O infinite Goodness, Thou lovest men so much, Thou hast done so much that Thou mightest be loved by men, how is it that amongst men there are so few who love Thee? I will no longer be as I have hitherto been, of the unhappy number of those ungrateful creatures. I am resolved to love Thee as much as I can, and to love no other than Thee. Thou deservest it, and Thou commandest me with so much earnestness to do so, I am resolved to satisfy Thee.

Grant, O God of my soul, that I may fully satisfy Thee. I entreat Thee to grant me this favour by the merits of Thy Passion, and I confidently hope for it. Bestow the goods of the earth on those who desire them; I desire and seek the great treasure of Thy love alone. I love Thee, my Jesus; I love Thee, infinite Goodness. Thou art all my riches, my whole satisfaction, my entire love.

*Ejac.* My Jesus, Thou hast given Thy whole self to me; I give my whole self to Thee!

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION as above, page 86.

### VISIT TO MARY.

My Lady, St. Bernard calls thee "the ravisher of hearts." He says that thou goest about stealing hearts by the charms of thy beauty and goodness. Steal also my heart and will, I beseech thee: I give them wholly to thee: offer them to God with thine own.

*Ejac.* Mother most amiable, pray for me!

CONCLUDING PRAYER as on page 87.

## Evening Meditation

## *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

### XVIII.—HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST IS NOT VAIN OF HIS OWN WORTH, BUT HUMBLES HIMSELF, AND IS GLAD TO BE HUMBLED.

I.

It was the saying of St. Teresa, "Think not that thou hast advanced far in perfection till thou considerest thyself the worst of all, and desirest to be placed below all."

And on this maxim the Saint acted, and so have done all the Saints; St. Francis of Assisi, St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, and the rest, considered themselves the greatest sinners in the world, and were surprised that the earth sheltered them, and did not rather open under their feet to swallow them up alive; and they expressed themselves to this effect with the sincerest conviction. The Blessed John of Avila, who from his earliest infancy had led a holy life, was on his death-bed; and the priest who came to attend him said many sublime things to him, taking him for what indeed he was, a great servant of God and a learned man; but Father Avila thus spoke to him: "Father, I pray you to make the recommendation of my soul, as of a criminal condemned to death; for such I am." This is the opinion which Saints entertain of themselves in life and death.

II.

We, too, must act in this manner, if we would save our souls, and keep ourselves in the grace of God till death, reposing all our confidence in God alone. The proud man relies on his own strength and falls on that account; but the humble man, by placing all his trust in God alone, stands firm and falls not, however violent and multiplied the temptations may be; for his watchword is: *I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me*—(Phil. iv. 13). The devil at one time tempts us to presumption, at another time to diffidence: whenever he suggests to us that we are in no danger of falling, then we should tremble the more; for were God but for an instant to withdraw His grace from us, we are lost. When, again, he tempts us to diffidence, then let us turn to God, and thus address Him with great confidence: *In thee, O Lord, have I hoped, I shall never be confounded*—(Ps. xxx. 2). My God, in Thee I have put all my hopes; I hope never to meet with confusion, nor to be bereft of Thy grace. We ought to exercise ourselves

continually, even to the very last moment of our life, in these acts of diffidence in ourselves and confidence in God, always beseeching God to grant us humility.

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# Tuesday—First Week after Pentecost

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## Morning Meditation

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### *JESUS DELIGHTS TO COME TO US IN HOLY COMMUNION.*

Oh, how delighted Jesus is to be united to our souls! To excite souls to receive Him He exhorts them to do so by many invitations. *Come, eat my bread, and drink the wine which I have mingled for you*—(Prov. ix. 5). *Eat, O friends, and drink,*—speaking of this Heavenly Bread and Wine. These invitations all proceed from the ardent desire Jesus has to come to us in this Sacrament.

#### I.

*Eat, O friends, and drink, and be inebriated, my dearly beloved*—(Cant. v. 1). The "friends," that is, beginners, who scarcely enjoy the Divine friendship, when they receive the Holy Communion, feed indeed on the Flesh of Jesus Christ, but they eat with labour; while those who are on the way to perfection eat with less difficulty. But by the "dearly beloved" are meant the

perfect, who, inebriated with holy love, live almost out of the world, forgetting all things, even themselves, and think only how they may love and please their God.

My beloved Jesus, I am not yet perfect, but Thou canst make me perfect. I am not dear to Thee, and it is my own fault, because I have been ungrateful and unfaithful; but Thou canst make me dear to Thee by inebriating me this morning with Thy love. *Thy kingdom come*—(Matt. vi. 10). Come, my beloved Lord, and take possession of my whole soul. Establish Thy kingdom in me; so that Thou alone mayest reign in me, that Thy love alone may command me, and that Thy love alone may I obey. Inebriate me, inebriate me entirely; make me forget all creatures, myself, my interests, and all, that I may love nothing but Thee, my God, my Treasure, all my Good, my All! May I sigh for Thee alone, seek Thee alone, think of Thee alone, and please Thee alone. Do this by the merits of Thy Passion. This only do I ask of Thee; for this I hope.

II.

*I found him whom my soul loveth. I held him, and I will not let him go*—(Cant. iii. 4). So ought every soul to say who is united with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament: Creatures, depart from me! Go out altogether from my heart! I loved you once because I was blind; now I love you not, nor can I ever love you again. I have found another Good, infinitely more delightful than you. I have found in myself my Jesus, Who has enamoured me of His beauty. To this Love I have given myself entirely. He has already accepted me, so that I am no longer my own. Creatures, farewell! I am not, nor shall I ever again be yours; but I am and shall always be Christ's. He, too, is mine, and will always be mine: *I held him and I will not let him go.* Now I have pressed Him to my heart, receiving Him in

the Holy Communion; for the future I will hold Him with my love, and will not let Him leave me again.

Permit me, sweet Saviour, to embrace Thee so closely that I may never more be separated from Thee. Behold, I press Thee to myself, my Jesus! I love Thee! I love Thee! Oh, that I could love Thee worthily! I wish that my only happiness and repose should be to love Thee and please Thee. Do Thou command all creatures to leave me, and not to disturb me. Say to them: *I adjure you, do not arouse or waken my love*—(Cant. viii. 4). Ah, if I do not wish it, creatures cannot enter in to disturb and divide me from Thee. Strengthen, then, my will; unite my miserable heart to Thy Divine Heart that it may always will what Thou willest. Do this, Lord, by Thy merits.

## Spiritual Reading

### *CORAM SANCTISSIMO.*

SIXTH VISIT.

*Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*—(Luke xii. 34). Jesus Christ says that where a person esteems his treasure to be, there also he keeps his affections. Therefore the Saints, who neither esteem nor love any other treasure than Jesus Christ, centre their hearts and their love in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

My most amiable Jesus, hidden under the sacramental veils, Who for the love which Thou bearest me, remainest night and day imprisoned in this Tabernacle, draw, I beseech Thee, my whole heart to Thee, that I may think of none but Thee, that I may love and seek and hope for Thee alone. Do this by the merits of Thy Passion, through which I seek and hope for it.

Ah, my sacramental Lord and divine Lover, how

amiable and tender are the inventions of Thy love to gain the love of souls! O Eternal Word, Thou, in becoming Man, wast not satisfied with dying for us; Thou hast also given us this Sacrament as a Companion, as Food, and as a pledge of Heaven. Thou reducest Thyself so as to appear amongst us, at one time as an Infant in a stable, at another as a poor Man in a workshop, then as a Criminal on a gibbet, and now as Bread on an altar. Tell me, couldst Thou invent other means to win our love?

O infinite Goodness, when shall I really begin to correspond with such refinements of love? Lord, I will live only to love Thee alone. And of what use is life to me, if I do not spend it wholly in loving and pleasing Thee, my beloved Redeemer, Who hast poured out Thy whole life for me? And what have I to love if it is not Thee, Who art all beauty, all condescension, all goodness, all loving, all worthy of love? May I live only to love Thee! May the mere remembrance of Thy love dissolve my soul with love! May the very names of *Crib* and *Cross* and *Sacrament* inflame it with the desire to do great things for Thee, O my Jesus, Who hast indeed done and suffered such great things for me!

*Ejac.* Grant, O my Lord, that before I die I may do something for Thee!

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION as above, page 86.

## VISIT TO MARY.

*As a fair olive-tree in the plain*—(Ecclus. xxiv. 19). I am, says Mary, the beautiful olive-tree from which the oil of mercy always flows. And I stand in the plain that all may see me. "Remember," let us say in the words of the prayer of St. Bernard, "O most compassionate Mary, that it has never been heard of in any age, that any one having recourse to thy protection was abandoned by thee." Most merciful Queen, such a thing was never

heard of, that any one having recourse to thy aid was abandoned; I will not be the first unfortunate creature who, having recourse to thee, was abandoned.

*Ejac.* O Mary, grant me the grace always to have recourse to thee!

CONCLUDING PRAYER as on page 87.

## Evening Meditation

### *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

XIX.—HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST IS NOT VAIN, BUT HUMBLES HIMSELF, AND IS GLAD TO BE HUMBLED.

I.

But it is not enough, in order to be humble, to have a lowly opinion of ourselves, and to consider ourselves the miserable beings that we really are; the man who is truly humble, says Thomas à Kempis, despises himself, and wishes also to be despised by others. This is what Jesus Christ so earnestly recommends us to practise, after His example: *Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart*—(Matt. xi. 29). Whoever styles himself the greatest sinner in the world, and then is angry when others despise him, plainly shows humility of tongue, but not of heart. St. Thomas Aquinas says that a person who resents being slighted may be certain that he is far distant from perfection, even though he should work miracles. The Divine Mother sent St. Ignatius Loyola from Heaven to instruct St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi in humility; and behold the lesson which the Saint gave her: "Humility is a gladness at whatever leads us to despise ourselves." Mark well, *a gladness*; if the feelings are stirred to resentment at the contempt we receive, let us be glad, at least, in spirit.

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II.

And how is it possible for a soul not to love contempt if she loves Jesus Christ, and beholds how her God was buffeted and spit upon, and how He suffered in His Passion! *Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others struck his face with the palms of their hands*—(Matt. xxvi. 67). For this purpose our Redeemer wishes us to keep His image exposed on our altars, not indeed representing Him in glory, but nailed to the Cross, that we might have His ignominies constantly before our eyes; a sight which made the Saints rejoice at being vilified in this world. And such was the prayer which St. John of the Cross addressed to Jesus Christ, when He appeared to him with the Cross upon His shoulders: "O Lord, let me suffer, and be despised for Thee!" My Lord, on beholding Thee so reviled for my love, I only ask of Thee to let me suffer and be despised for Thy love.

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## Wednesday—First Week after Pentecost

### Morning Meditation

### *HOLY COMMUNION THE GREAT GIFT OF JESUS CHRIST TO MAN.*

*Take ye and eat: this is my body*—(Matt. xxvi. 26). Let us consider how great a Gift Jesus Christ has bestowed upon us in giving us His entire Self to be our Food in Holy Communion. St. Augustine says that

Jesus, though He is the Almighty God, could give us no more. "Omnipotent though He is, He could give no more."

I.

Consider how great a Gift Jesus Christ has bestowed upon us in giving us His entire Self to be our Food in the Holy Communion. St. Augustine says that Jesus, though He is the Almighty God, yet could give us no more: "Omnipotent though He is, He could give no more." And St. Bernardine of Sienna adds that no greater treasure can be in the heart of man than the Body of Christ: "What greater treasure can a soul desire or achieve than the most holy Body of Jesus Christ?" The Prophet Isaias exclaims: *Make his works known among the people*—(Is. xii. 4). Publish, O men, the loving invitations of our good God! If our Redeemer had not given us this Gift, who could ever have asked It of Him? Who could ever have dared to say to Him: Lord, if Thou wilt make us know Thy love, conceal Thyself under the species of bread, and allow us to feed on Thee? This very idea would have been reckoned folly. "Would it not have been thought madness," says St. Augustine, "to say: Eat My Flesh, drink My Blood?" When Christ announced to His disciples this gift of the Most Holy Sacrament, which He intended to leave them, they could not bring themselves to believe, and many left Him saying, *How can this man give us his flesh to eat . . .This saying is hard, and who can hear it?*—(Jo. vi. 53-61). But what men could never have imagined, the great love of Jesus Christ has thought of and accomplished.

St. Bernardine says that our Lord has left us this Sacrament as a *Remembrance* of the love He showed us in His Passion: "This Sacrament is a memorial of His love." And this agrees with what St. Luke records of the words of Jesus Christ Himself: *Do this for a commemoration of me*—(Luke xxii. 19). St. Bernardine

adds that the love of Our Lord was not satisfied in sacrificing His life for us : before He died, He was constrained by this very love to give us the very greatest of all His gifts, by giving us Himself to be our Food : " In that excess of fervour, when He was ready to die for us, He was forced by exceeding love to do a greater work than He had ever yet accomplished, to give us Himself to be our Food."

O my Jesus, what has led Thee to give Thy whole Self to be our Food? After this Gift, what hast Thou left to give us to force us to love Thee? O Lord, give us light, and make us know how excessive is the love which has made Thee reduce Thyself into Food to unite Thyself with us poor sinners. That Thou thus givest Thyself wholly to us is a reason why we should give ourselves wholly to Thee. My Redeemer, how could I have offended Thee Who hast loved me, and Who didst leave nothing undone to win my love? Thou didst become Man for me. Thou didst die for me, and didst make Thyself my Food; tell me what remains for Thee to do. I love Thee, O Infinite Goodness, Infinite Love!

II.

The Abbot Guerric says that Jesus has shown in this Sacrament the last effort of His love : " He poured forth upon His friends all the power of His love." The Council of Trent expresses it still better in saying that in the Blessed Eucharist Jesus, " as it were poured forth the riches of His love towards man."

What a proof of love it would be considered, says St. Francis of Sales, if a prince, being at table, should send a poor man a portion of his own dish; and how much more if he should send him his whole dinner! But what would be thought if he should send him a portion of his own flesh? Jesus, in the Holy Communion, gives us not only part of His table, not only part of His Body, but His whole Body : *Take ye and eat: this is my body.*

And with His Body He gives us also His Soul and His Divinity. "In short," says St. John Chrysostom, "He has given Himself wholly, and for Himself He has reserved nothing." And the angelical Doctor says: "God has given us in the Holy Eucharist all that He is, and all that He has." Behold this great God, Whom the whole world cannot contain, exclaims St. Bonaventure in admiration, makes Himself our Prisoner in the Holy Sacrament: "He Whom the whole world cannot contain is our Captive!" And if our Lord gives us His whole Self in the Blessed Eucharist, how can we fear that He will ever deny us any grace we ask of Him? *How hath he not also, with him, given us all things?*—(Rom. viii. 32).

Lord, come often into my soul, inflame me wholly with Thy holy love, and make me forget all else, to think of and love none but Thee. Most holy Mary, pray for me, and by thy intercession make me worthy frequently to receive Thy Son in His ever-blessed Sacrament.

## Spiritual Reading

### *CORAM SANCTISSIMO.*

SEVENTH VISIT.

*Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world*—(Matt. xxviii. 20). Thus our loving Shepherd, Who has given His life for us who are His sheep, would not separate Himself from us by death. Behold me, He says, beloved sheep, I am always with you; for you I have remained on earth in this Sacrament; here you find me whenever you please, to help and console you by My presence. I will never leave you until the end of the world; as long as you are on earth. The Bridegroom, says St. Peter of Alcantara, wished to leave

His bride company, that she might not remain alone during so long an absence; and therefore He left this Sacrament in which He Himself, the best companion He could leave her, remains.

My sweetest Lord, my most amiable Saviour, I am now visiting Thee upon this altar; but Thou returnest me the visit with far other love when Thou dost enter my soul in the Holy Communion. Thou art then, not only present to me, but Thou becomest my Food; Thou unitest and givest Thy whole self to me, so that I can then say with truth: My Jesus, Thou art now all mine. Since, then, Thou givest Thyself all to me, it is reasonable that I should give myself all to Thee. I am a worm, and Thou art God. O God of love! O love of my soul! when shall I find myself all Thine, in deeds, and not in words only? Thou canst do this; by the merits of Thy Blood increase my confidence, that I may at once obtain this grace of Thee, that I may find myself all Thine, and in nothing my own. Thou graciously hearest, O Lord, the prayers of all: hear now the prayers of a soul that indeed desires really to love Thee. I desire to love Thee with all my strength, I desire to obey Thee in all that Thou willest, without self-interest, without consolations, without reward. I wish to serve Thee through love, only to please Thee, only to content Thy Heart, which is so passionately enamoured of me. My reward will be to love Thee. O beloved Son of the Eternal Father, take possession of my liberty, of my will, of all that I possess, and of my entire self, and give me Thyself. I love Thee, I seek after Thee, I sigh after Thee; I desire Thee, I desire Thee, I desire Thee!

*Ejac.* My Jesus, make me all Thine own.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION as above, page 86.

### VISIT TO MARY.

Our own most amiable Lady, the whole Church proclaims and salutes thee as, "Our hope"! Thou, then,

who art the hope of all, be also my hope. St. Bernard called thee "the whole ground of his hope," and said: "Let him who despairs hope in thee." Thus also will I address thee: My own Mary, thou savest even those who are in despair; in thee I place all my hope.

*Ejac.* Mary, Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me!

CONCLUDING PRAYER as on page 87.

## Evening Meditation

### *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

XX.—HE WHO LOVES JESUS CHRIST IS NOT VAIN, BUT HUMBLES HIMSELF, AND IS GLAD TO BE HUMBLED.

I.

St. Francis of Sales said, "to support injury is the touchstone of humility and of true virtue." If a person aspiring to spirituality practises prayer, frequent Communion, fasts, and mortifies himself, and yet cannot put up with an affront, or a biting word, what is it a sign of? It is a sign that he is a hollow reed, without humility and without virtue. And what indeed can a soul do that loves Jesus Christ, if she is unable to endure a slight for the love of Jesus Christ, Who has endured so much for her. Thomas à Kempis, in his golden little book of the *Imitation of Christ*, writes as follows: "Since you have such an abhorrence of being humbled, it is a sign that you are not dead to the world, have no humility, and that you do not keep God before your eyes. He that has not God before his eyes is disturbed at every syllable of censure that he hears." Thou canst not endure cuffs and blows for God—endure at least a passing word.

II.

Oh, what surprise and scandal does that person occasion, who communicates often, and then is ready to resent every little word of contempt! On the contrary, what edification does a soul give that answers contempt with words of mildness, spoken in order to conciliate the offender; or perhaps makes no reply at all, nor complains of it to others, but continues with placid looks and without showing the least sign of indignation! St. John Chrysostom says that a meek person is not only serviceable to himself but likewise to others, by the good example he sets them of meekness in bearing contempt: "The meek man is useful to himself and to others." Thomas à Kempis mentions, with regard to this subject, several things in which we should practise humility. He writes as follows: "What others say shall command an attentive hearing, and what you say shall be taken no notice of. Others shall make a request and obtain it; you shall ask for something and meet with a refusal. Others shall be magnified in the mouths of men, and on you no one shall bestow a word. Such and such an office shall be conferred on others, but you shall be passed by as unfit for anything. With such like trials the Lord is wont to prove His faithful servant, and to see how far he has learnt to overcome himself and to hold his peace. Nature, indeed, will at times not like it; but you will derive immense profit thereby, if you support all in silence."

# Feast of Corpus Christi

## Morning Meditation

### *THE LOVE OF JESUS IN GIVING US HIMSELF IN HOLY COMMUNION.*

The Most Holy Sacrament is the Gift of God's pure love. Jesus had already given Himself to us in many ways; as our Companion, our Master, our Father, our Light, our Example, our Victim. "It was the last effort of love when He gave Himself to be our Food."—(St. Bernardine).

I.

Let us consider the great love Jesus has shown us in giving us Himself in the Holy Eucharist. The Most Holy Sacrament is the Gift of pure love. According to the Divine decree it was necessary that our Redeemer should die in order to save us, and should by the sacrifice of His life, satisfy the Divine justice for our sins; but what necessity was there that Jesus Christ, after dying for us, should leave us Himself to be our Food? Yet, thus His love willed. St. Laurence Justinian says His excessive charity alone led Him to institute the Most Holy Sacrament, only to make us understand the immense love He bears us; and this is precisely what St. John writes: *Jesus, knowing that his hour was come that he should pass out of this world to the Father: having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them unto the end*—(Jo. xiii. 1). Knowing that the

time had come for Him to quit this world, Jesus would leave us the greatest possible proof of His love, which was this Gift of the Most Blessed Sacrament, as we are taught in these words, *He loved them unto the end*; that is, "with extreme love He loved them to the utmost," as Theophylact and St. Chrysostom explain it.

And we must observe what the Apostle mentions, that the time in which Jesus Christ was pleased to leave us this Gift was the very time of His Death: *The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, broke, and said: Take ye and eat; this is my body*—(1 Cor. xi. 23, 24). While men were preparing scourges and thorns, and a Cross to put Him to death, our loving Saviour wished to leave us this last proof of His love. And why did He institute this Sacrament when He was going to die, and not before? St. Bernardine says that He did so because "the last marks of love given by dying friends remain more easily in our memory, and are more dearly cherished." The Saint adds that Jesus Christ had already given Himself to us in many ways; He had made Himself our Companion, our Master, our Father, our Light, our Example, and our Victim: "It was the last effort of love when He gave Himself to be our Food; for He gave Himself to be united completely to us, as food and he who eats it are united; so that our Redeemer was not satisfied with merely uniting Himself to our human nature, but He was pleased to find in this Sacrament the means of uniting Himself to each of us in particular.

O infinite love of Jesus, worthy of infinite love! Ah! my Jesus, when shall I love Thee as Thou hast loved me? Thou couldst do nothing more to make me love Thee; and I have forsaken Thee, O infinite Good, for the sake of vile and miserable goods! Ah! enlighten me, my God, and discover to me always more and more the greatness of Thy goodness, that my whole soul may be enamoured of Thee, and that I may labour to please Thee.

II.

St. Francis of Sales says : " There is no action in which we may more perfectly see the tenderness and love of our Saviour than in this, in which He, as it were, annihilates Himself, and reduces Himself into Food, to penetrate our souls, and unite Himself to the hearts of His faithful." " So that," says St. John Chrysostom, " we unite ourselves, and are made one body and one flesh with that of the Lord, on Whom the Angels dare not fix their eyes." The same Saint adds, " What shepherd ever fed his sheep with his own blood? But why do I speak of shepherds? There are many mothers who give their children to others to be nursed; but He acts not thus, He feeds us with His own Blood." But why did He make Himself our Food? Because, says the Saint, He loved us ardently, and so desired to unite Himself to us and to become one and the same thing with us : " He mingled Himself with us that we might be one thing with Him : for this is the property of those who ardently love." Thus, then, did Jesus Christ will to perform the greatest of all miracles—*He hath made a remembrance of his wonderful works, he hath given food to them that fear him* (Ps. cx. 4, 5)—in order to satisfy the desire He had of remaining with us and of uniting our hearts to His own Most Sacred Heart. " Oh, how wonderful is Thy love, Lord Jesus!" exclaims St. Laurence Justinian; " Thy desire is to incorporate us so entirely with Thy own Body, that our heart and soul may be inseparably united to Thine own."

The great servant of God, Father de la Colombiere, used to say : If anything could shake my faith in the mystery of the Eucharist, I should not doubt the power, but the love which God shows us in His Sacrament. If you ask me how bread becomes the Body of Jesus—how Jesus is to be found in many places—I reply, God can do all things. But if you ask me how God can love man to such an excess as to become his Food,—I can only answer that I do not understand it, and that the love of Jesus cannot be comprehended.

But, O Lord, it seems that such an excessive affection as to reduce Thyself to Food is not becoming Thy majesty. St. Bernard answers that love makes the lover forget his own dignity; and St. Chrysostom answers similarly, that love does not seek what is suitable when it wishes to make itself known to the beloved: "Love neglects reason; and goes where it is led, not where it ought." The angelical St. Thomas was, then, right in calling this the Sacrament of Love, and the Pledge of Love; and St. Bernard, in calling it "the Love of loves." So was St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi in calling Maundy Thursday, on which day this Sacrament was instituted, "the day of love."

I love Thee and I thank Thee, O my Jesus, my Love, my All; and I wish to unite myself frequently to Thee in this Sacrament, in order to detach myself from all things, and to love Thee alone, Who art my Life. Through the merits of Thy Passion, assist me, O my Redeemer! O Mother of Jesus, and my Mother, do thou, too, assist me; beg of Jesus to inflame my whole heart with His holy love.

## Spiritual Reading

### *CORAM SANCTISSIMO.*

EIGHTH VISIT.

To every soul that visits Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament, He addresses the words He said to the Sacred Spouse: *Arise, make haste, my love, my dove, my beautiful one, and come*—(Cant. ii. 10). Thou, O soul, that visitest Me, *arise* from thy miseries; I am here to enrich thee with graces. *Make haste*, approach, come near Me; fear not My majesty, which has humbled itself in this Sacrament in order to take away thy fear, and to give thee confidence. *My beloved*, thou art no longer My enemy, but My friend, since thou lovest Me and I

love thee. *My beautiful one*, My grace has made thee fair. *And come*, draw near and cast thyself into My arms, and ask Me with the greatest confidence whatever thou willest.

St. Teresa says that this great King of Glory has disguised Himself in this Sacrament under the species of bread, and that He has concealed His majesty to encourage us to approach His divine Heart with greater confidence and affection; let us unite ourselves to Him, and let us ask Him for graces.

O Eternal Word made Man, and present for my sake in this Sacrament, what joy should be mine now that I am in Thy presence, Who art my God, infinite Majesty and infinite Goodness, and Who hast so tender an affection for my soul! Ye souls who love God, wherever you may be, either in Heaven or on earth, love Him for me also. Mary, my Mother, help me to love Him. And Thou, most loving Lord, make Thyself the object of all my love. Make Thyself the Lord of my entire will; possess my entire self. I consecrate my whole mind to Thee, that it may always be occupied with the thought of Thy goodness; I also consecrate my body to Thee, that it may help me to please Thee; I consecrate my whole soul to Thee, that it may be all Thine. Would, O Beloved of my soul, that all men could know the tenderness of the love Thou bearest them, that all might live to honour Thee and to please Thee, as Thou desirest and deservest. Grant that, at least, I may always live enamoured of Thine infinite beauty. From this day forward my desire is to do all that I can to be pleasing to Thee. I now resolve to abandon everything, be it what it may, as soon as I perceive that it displeases Thee, however much it may cost me, even should it be necessary for this purpose to lose all, or even to lay down my life. Fortunate indeed shall I be, if I lose all to gain Thee, my God, my Treasure, my Love, my All!

*Ejac.* Jesus, my love, take all that I have; take full possession of me.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION as above, page 86.

### Visit to Mary.

*Whoever is a little one, let him come to me*—(Prov. ix. 4). Mary invites all children who need a mother to have recourse to her, as to the most loving of all mothers. The devout Nieremberg says that the love of all mothers is but a shadow in comparison with the love which Mary bears to each one of us. My Mother, Mother of my soul, thou who lovest me and desirest my salvation more than any other after God—O Mother, show thyself a Mother!

*Ejac.* My Mother, grant that I may always remember thee!

Concluding Prayer as on page 87.

## Evening Meditation

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### *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

XXI.—HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST IS NOT VAIN, BUT HUMBLES HIMSELF, AND IS GLAD TO BE HUMBLED.

I.

It was a saying of St. Jane Frances de Chantal that "a person who is truly humble takes occasion from receiving some humiliation to humble himself the more." Yes, for he who is truly humble never supposes himself humbled as much as he deserves. Those who behave in this manner are styled *blessed* by Jesus Christ. They are not called blessed who are esteemed by the world, who are honoured and praised as noble, as learned, as powerful; but they who are spoken ill of by the world, who are persecuted and calumniated; for it is for such that a glorious reward is prepared in Heaven, if they only bear all with patience: *Blessed are you when they*

*shall revile you and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you untruly for my sake: be glad and rejoice for your reward is very great in heaven*—(Matt. v. 11, 12).

O Incarnate Word, I entreat Thee, by the merits of Thy holy humility, which led Thee to embrace so many ignominies and injuries for our love, deliver me from all pride, and grant me a share of Thy humility. And what right have I, O Jesus, to complain of any affront whatever that may be offered me, after having so often deserved hell? O my Jesus, by the merit of all the scorn and affronts endured for me in Thy Passion, grant me the grace to live and die humbled on this earth, as Thou didst live and die humbled for my sake. For Thy love I would willingly be despised and forsaken by all the world; but without Thee I can do nothing. I love Thee, O my sovereign Good; I love Thee, O Beloved of my soul!

II.

The grand occasion for practising humility is when we receive correction for some fault from superiors or from others. Some people resemble the hedgehog; they seem all calmness and meekness as long as they are not touched; but no sooner does a superior or a friend touch them, by an observation on something which they have done imperfectly, than they forthwith become all thorns and answer warmly, that so and so is not true, or that they were right in doing so, or that such a correction is quite uncalled for: in a word, to rebuke them is to become their enemy; they behave like persons who rave at the surgeon for paining them in the cure of their wounds. "*Medicanti irascitur*—they are angry with their physician," writes St. Bernard. "When the virtuous and humble man is corrected for a fault," says St. John Chrysostom, "he grieves for having committed it; the proud man on the other hand, on receiving correction, grieves also; but he grieves that his fault is

detected; and on this account he is troubled, gives answers, and is angry at the person who corrects him." This is the golden rule given by St. Philip Neri, to be observed with regard to receiving correction: "Whoever would really become a saint must never excuse himself, although what is laid to his charge be not true." And there is only one case to be excepted from this rule, and that is when self-defence may appear necessary to prevent scandal. Oh, what merit with God has that soul which is wrongfully reprehended, and yet keeps silence, and refrains from defending herself! St. Teresa said: "There are occasions when a soul makes more progress and acquires a greater degree of perfection by refraining from excusing herself than by listening to ten sermons; because, by not excusing herself she begins to obtain freedom of spirit, and to be heedless of whether the world speaks well or ill of her."

I love Thee, O my Jesus, and I hope, through Thee, to fulfil my promise of suffering all for Thee—affronts, betrayals, persecutions, afflictions, dryness, and desolation. Enough it is for me if Thou dost not forsake me, O sole object of the love of my soul. Suffer me never more to estrange myself from Thee. Enkindle in me the desire to please Thee. Grant me fervour in loving Thee. Give me peace of mind in suffering for Thee. Give me resignation in all contradictions. Have mercy on me. I deserve nothing; but I fix all my hopes in Thee, Who hast purchased me with Thine own Blood. And I hope all from thee, too, O my Queen and my Mother Mary, who art the refuge of sinners!

# Friday—First Week after Pentecost

## Morning Meditation

### *THE AMIABLE HEART OF JESUS.*

The Heart of Jesus is all pure, all holy, all full of love towards God and towards us. Every perfection, every virtue reigns in this Heart. This is the Heart in which God Himself finds all His delight. O amiable Heart of Jesus, Thou dost well deserve the love of all hearts.

#### I.

He who shows himself amiable in everything must necessarily make himself loved. Oh, if we only applied ourselves to discover all the good qualities by which Jesus Christ renders Himself worthy of our love, we should all be under the happy necessity of loving Him. And what heart among all hearts can be found more worthy of love than the Heart of Jesus? A Heart all pure, all holy, all full of love towards God and towards us; because all Its desires are only for the Divine glory and our good. This is the Heart in which God finds all His delight. Every perfection, every virtue reigns in this Heart;—a most ardent love for God, His Father, united to the greatest humility and respect that can possibly exist; a sovereign confusion for our sins, which He has taken upon Himself, united to the extreme confidence of a most affectionate Son; a sovereign abhorrence of our sins, united to a lively compassion for our miseries; an extreme sorrow, united to a perfect conformity to the

Will of God; so that in Jesus is found everything that is most amiable.

O my amiable Redeemer, what object more worthy of love could the Eternal Father command me to love than Thee? Thou art the Beauty of Paradise, Thou art the Love of Thy Father, Thy Heart is the throne of all virtues. O amiable Heart of my Jesus, Thou dost well deserve the love of all hearts; poor and wretched is that heart which loves Thee not! Thus miserable, O my God, has my heart been during all the time in which it has not loved Thee. But I will not continue to be thus wretched; I love Thee, I will always continue to love Thee, O my Jesus. O my Lord, I have hitherto forgotten Thee, and now what can I expect? That my ingratitude will oblige Thee to forget me entirely and forsake me forever? No, my Saviour, do not permit it. Thou art the object of the love of God; and shalt Thou not, then, be loved by a miserable sinner such as I am, who have been so favoured and loved by Thee? O lovely flames that burn in the amiable Heart of my Jesus, enkindle in my poor heart that holy fire which Jesus came down from Heaven to kindle on earth. Consume and destroy all the impure affections that dwell in my heart and prevent it from being entirely His.

## II.

Some are attracted to love others by their beauty, others by their innocence, others by living with them, others by devotion. But if there were a person in whom all these and other virtues were united, who could help loving him? If we heard that there was in a distant foreign country a prince who was handsome, humble, courteous, devout, full of charity, affable to all, who rendered good to those who did him evil; then, although we knew not who he was, and though he knew not us, and though we were not acquainted with him, nor was there any possibility of our ever being so, yet

we should be enamoured of him, and should be constrained to love him. How is it then, possible, that Jesus Christ, Who possesses in Himself all these virtues, and in the most perfect degree, and Who loves us so tenderly, how is it possible that He should be so little loved by men, and should not be the only object of our love? O my God, how is it that Jesus, Who alone is worthy of love, and Who has given us so many proofs of the love that He bears us, should be alone, as it were, the unlucky One with us, Who cannot arrive at making us love Him; as if He were not sufficiently worthy of our love! This is what caused floods of tears to St. Rose of Lima, St. Catherine of Genoa, St. Teresa, St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, who, on considering the ingratitude of men, exclaimed, weeping: "Love is not loved! Love is not loved!"

O my God, grant that I may only exist to love Thee, and Thee alone, my dearest Saviour. If at one time I despised Thee, Thou art now the only object of my love. I love Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee, and I will never love any but Thee! My beloved Lord, do not disdain to accept the love of a heart which has once afflicted Thee by my sins. Let it be Thy glory to exhibit to the Angels a heart now burning with the love of Thee, which hitherto shunned and despised Thee. Most holy Virgin Mary, my hope, do thou assist me, and beseech Jesus to make me, by His grace, all that He wishes me to be.

## Spiritual Reading

### *CORAM SANCTISSIMO.*

NINTH VISIT.

St. John says that he saw our Lord girt up with a golden girdle, which supported His breasts: *I saw the Son of Man girt about the breasts with a golden girdle*

—(Apoc. i. 13). Thus also is Jesus in the Sacrament of the Altar, with His breasts all filled with milk; that is to say, with the graces which, in His mercy, He desires to bestow upon us. And as a mother whose breasts are overcharged with milk goes about seeking children who may draw it off, and relieve her of its weight, so also does He call out to us, *You shall be carried at the breasts* —(Is. lxvi. 12).

The Venerable Father Alvarez saw Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament with His hands filled with graces, and seeking to whom He might dispense them. Of St. Catharine of Sienna it is related that when she approached the Most Holy Sacrament she did so precisely with the same loving avidity with which a child flies to its mother's breast.

O most beloved and only-begotten Son of the Eternal Father, I know that Thou art the object most worthy of being loved. I desire to love Thee as much as Thou deservest to be loved, or at least as much as a soul can ever desire to love Thee. I fully understand that I, who am a traitor and so great a rebel to Thy love, deserve not to love Thee, neither do I deserve to approach so near to Thee as I now am in this church. But I feel that Thou, for all this, seekest my love. I hear Thee say: *My son, give me thy heart*—(Prov. xxiii. 26). *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart* —(Matt. xxii. 37). I understand that it is for this end Thou hast spared my life, and not sent me to hell, that I might be converted and turn all my affections to Thee. Since, then, Thou art pleased that even I should love Thee, oh, yes, my God, I will do so. Behold, here I am! To Thee I yield myself up: I give myself to Thee: I love Thee. O God! all goodness, all love, I choose Thee for the only King and Lord of my poor heart. Thou desirest it, and my will is to give it to Thee: it is cold, it is loathsome; but if Thou acceptest it, Thou wilt change it. Change me, my Lord, change me; I will no longer dare to live as I have hitherto lived, ungrateful, and with so little love towards Thine infinite Goodness, which loves me so much and deserves

an infinite love. Enable me to supply from this day forward all the love I have hitherto failed to bear Thee.

*Ejac.* My God, my God, I will love Thee! I will love Thee! I will love Thee!

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION as above, page 86.

### VISIT TO MARY.

In all things like to her Son Jesus, is His Mother Mary; and as she is the Mother of Mercy, she is thrice happy when she succours and consoles the miserable. So great is the desire of this Mother to bestow graces on all that Bernardine de Bustis says "she desires more to do us good and to impart to us graces than we can desire to receive them."

*Ejac.* Hail, our hope!

CONCLUDING PRAYER as on page 87.

## Evening Meditation

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## *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

## *"CHARITY IS NOT AMBITIOUS."*

### XX.—HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST DESIRES NOTHING BUT JESUS CHRIST.

I.

He that loves God does not desire to be esteemed and loved by his fellow-men: the single desire of his heart is to enjoy the favour of Almighty God, Who alone forms the object of his love. St. Hilary writes that all honour paid by the world is the business of the devil. And so it is; for the enemy traffics for hell when he infects the

soul with the desire of esteem; because, by thus laying aside humility, she runs great risks of plunging into every vice. St. James writes that, as God confers His graces with open hands upon the humble, so does He close them against the proud, whom He resists. *God resists the proud, and gives his grace to the humble*—(James iv. 6). He says, He *resists* the proud, signifying that He does not even listen to their prayers. And certainly, among the acts of pride we may reckon the desire to be honoured by men, and self-exaltation at receiving honours from them.

II.

We have a frightful example of this in the history of Brother Justin the Franciscan, who had even risen to a lofty state of contemplation; but because, perhaps—and indeed without a perhaps—he nourished within himself a desire of human esteem, behold what befell him. One day Pope Eugenius IV. sent for him; and on account of the great opinion he had of his sanctity, showed him peculiar marks of honour, embraced him, and made him sit by his side. Such high honours filled Brother Justin with self-conceit; on which St. John Capistran said to him, "Alas, Brother Justin, thou didst leave us an angel, and thou returnest a devil!" And, in fact, the hapless Brother becoming daily more and more puffed up with arrogance, and insisting on being treated according to his own estimate of himself, he at last committed murder. Afterwards, becoming apostate, he fled into the kingdom of Naples, where he perpetrated other atrocities, and there he died in prison, an apostate to the last. Hence it is that a certain great servant of God wisely said that when we hear or read of the fall of some towering cedars of Libanus, of a Solomon, a Tertullian, an Osius, who had all the reputation of saints, it is a sign that they were not wholly given to God, but nourished inwardly some spirit of pride, and so fell away.

Let us therefore tremble when we feel arise within us an ambition to appear in public, and to be esteemed by the world; and when the world pays us some tribute of honour, let us beware of taking complacency in it, which might prove the cause of our utter ruin.

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# Saturday—First Week after Pentecost

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## Morning Meditation

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### *THE GENEROUS HEART OF JESUS.*

It is a characteristic of good-hearted people to desire to make everybody happy, and especially the most distressed and afflicted. But who can ever find one who has a better heart than Jesus Christ? He is infinite Goodness itself, and has therefore a sovereign desire to communicate His riches to us: *With me are riches . . . that I may enrich them that love me*—(Prov. viii. 18, 21).

I.

Who can ever find one who has a better heart than Jesus Christ? He is infinite Goodness itself, and has therefore a sovereign desire to communicate His riches to us. *With me are riches . . . that I may enrich them that love me.* For this purpose Jesus made Himself

poor, as the Apostle says, that He might make us rich : *He became poor for your sakes, that through his poverty you might be rich*—(2 Cor. viii. 9). For this purpose also He chose to remain with us in the Most Holy Sacrament, where He remains constantly with His hands full of graces, as was seen by Father Balthazar Alvarez, to dispense them to those who come to visit Him. For this reason also He gives Himself wholly to us in Communion, giving us to understand from this that He cannot refuse us any good gifts, since He even gives Himself entirely to us : *How hath he not also, with him, given us all things?*—(Rom. viii. 32).

Ah, my Jesus, Thou hast not refused to give me Thy Blood and Thy life, and shall I refuse to give Thee my miserable heart? No, my dearest Redeemer, I offer it entirely to Thee. I give Thee all my will; do Thou accept it, and dispose of it at Thy pleasure. I can do nothing, and have nothing of my own, but I have this heart which Thou hast given me, and of which no one can deprive me. I may be deprived of my goods, my blood, my life, but not of my heart. With this heart I can love Thee; with this heart I will love Thee. I beseech Thee, O my God, teach me a perfect forgetfulness of myself. Teach me what I must do to arrive at Thy pure love, of which Thou in Thy goodness hast inspired me with the desire. I feel in myself a determination to please Thee; but in order to put my resolve into execution, I expect, and implore help from Thee. It depends on Thee, O loving Heart of Jesus, to make entirely Thine my poor heart, which hitherto has been so ungrateful, and through my own fault deprived of Thy love.

II.

In the Heart of Jesus we receive every good, every grace that we desire : *In all things you are made rich in him . . .so that nothing is wanting to you in any grace* —(1 Cor. i. 5, 7). And we must understand that we are

debtors to the Heart of Jesus for all the graces we have received—graces of Redemption, of vocation, of light, of pardon; the grace to resist temptations, and to bear patiently with contradictions; for without His assistance we could not do anything good: *Without me you can do nothing*—(Jo. xv. 5).

And if hitherto, says our Saviour, you have not received more graces, do not complain of Me, but blame yourself, who have neglected to seek them of Me: *Hitherto you have not asked anything; . . . ask, and you shall receive*—(Jo. xvi. 24). Oh, how rich and liberal is the Heart of Jesus towards every one that has recourse to Him! *Rich unto all that call upon him*—(Rom. x. 12). Oh, what great mercies do those souls receive who are earnest in asking help of Jesus Christ. David said, *For thou, O Lord, art sweet and mild, and plenteous to all who call upon thee*—(Ps. lxxxv. 5). Let us therefore always go to this Heart, and ask with confidence, and we shall obtain all we want.

Oh, grant that my heart may be all on fire with the love of Thee, dear Jesus, even as Thine is on fire with the love of me. Grant that my will may be entirely united to Thine, so that I may will nothing but what Thou willest, and that from this day forth Thy holy will may be the rule of all my actions, of all my thoughts, and of all my desires. I trust, O my Saviour, that Thou wilt not refuse me Thy grace to fulfil this resolution which I now make prostrate at Thy feet, to receive with submission whatever Thou mayest ordain for me and my affairs, as well in life as in death. Blessed art thou, O Immaculate Mary, who hadst thy heart always and entirely united to the Heart of Jesus. Obtain for me, O my Mother, that in future I may wish and desire only what Jesus wills and what thou willest.

## Spiritual Reading

### *CORAM SANCTISSIMO.*

TENTH VISIT.

O foolish ones of the world, says St. Augustine, miserable creatures, whither are you going to satisfy your hearts? Come to Jesus, for by Him alone can that pleasure which you seek be bestowed. "Unhappy creatures, whither are you going? The good you seek for comes from Him." My soul, be not of the number of these foolish ones; seek God alone: "seek for that one Good in which are all good things." And if thou desirest soon to find Him, behold, He is close to thee; tell Him what thou desirest, since for this end it is He is in the ciborium, to console thee, and to grant thy prayer. St. Teresa says that all are not allowed to speak to their king; the most that can be hoped for is to communicate with him through a third person. To converse with Thee, O King of glory, no third person is needed; Thou art always ready in the Sacrament of the Altar to give audience to all. Whoever desires Thee, always finds Thee there, and converses with Thee face to face. And even if anyone at length succeeds in speaking with a king, how many difficulties has he had to overcome before he can do so! Kings grant audiences only a few times in the year; but Thou, in this Sacrament, grantest audience to all night and day, and whenever we please.

O Sacrament of love, Thou Who, whether Thou givest Thyself in the Communion, or dwellest on the altar, knowest, by the tender attractions of Thy love, how to draw so many hearts to Thyself, who, enamoured of Thee, and filled with amazement at the sight of such love, burn with joy, and think always of Thee, draw also my miserable heart to Thyself; for it desires to love Thee, and to live enslaved by Thy love. For my part,

I now and henceforward place all my interests, all my hopes, and all my affections, my soul, my body,—I place all in the hands of Thy goodness. Accept me, O Lord, and dispose of me as Thou pleasest. I will never again complain, O my Love, of Thy holy dispensations; I know that, as all take their source in Thy loving Heart, they will be full of love, and for my good. It is enough for me to know that Thou willest them; I will them also in time and eternity. Do all Thou willest in me and with me; I unite my entire self to Thy will, which is all holy, all good, all beautiful, all perfect, all loving. O will of my God, how dear art Thou to me! My will is ever to live and die united to and bound up with Thee. Thy pleasure is my pleasure. I will that Thy desires be also my desires. O my God, my God, help me; make me henceforward live for Thee alone; make me will only what Thou willest, and make me live only to love Thy amiable will. Grant that I may die for Thy love, since Thou hast died and become Food for me. I curse those days in which I did my own will, so much to Thy displeasure. I love Thee, O Will of God, as much as I love God, since Thou art one with Him. I love Thee, then, with my whole heart, and give myself all to Thee.

*Ejac.* O will of God, Thou art my love.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION as above, page 86.

## VISIT TO MARY.

The great Queen says, *With me are riches . . . that I may enrich them that love me*—(Prov. viii. 18, 21). Let us love Mary if we would be rich in graces. The writer who signs himself "Idiota" styles her "the treasurer of graces." Blessed is he who has recourse to Mary with love and confidence. My Mother, my hope, thou canst make me a saint; from thee I hope for this favour.

*Ejac.* Mother most amiable, pray for me!

CONCLUDING PRAYER as on page 87.

## Evening Meditation

### *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

#### XXIII.—HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST DESIRES NOTHING BUT JESUS CHRIST.

I.

Let us be especially on our guard against all ambitious seeking of preference, and sensibility in points of honour. St. Teresa said, "Where points of honour prevail, there spirituality will never prevail." Many persons make profession of a spiritual life, but they are worshippers of self. They have the semblance of certain virtues, but they are ambitious of being praised in all their undertakings; and if nobody else praises them they praise themselves. In short, they strive to appear better than others; and if their honour be touched, they lose their peace, they leave off Holy Communion, they omit all their devotions, and find no rest till they imagine they have got back their former standing. The true lovers of God do not so behave. They not only carefully shun every word of self-complacency, but, further, they are sorry at hearing themselves commended by others, and it is their joy to see themselves held in small repute by the rest of men.

II.

That saying of St. Francis of Assisi is most true: "What I am before God, that I am." Of what use is it to pass for great in the eyes of the world, if before God we be vile and worthless? And on the contrary, what matters it to be despised by the world, provided we be dear and acceptable in the eyes of God? St. Augustine

thus writes : " The approbation of him who praises, neither heals a bad conscience, nor does the reproach of him who blames wound a good conscience." As the man who praises us cannot deliver us from the chastisement of our evil doings, so neither can he who blames us rob us of the merit of our good actions. " What does it matter," says St. Teresa, " though we be condemned and reviled by creatures, if before Thee, O God, we are great and without blame?" The Saints had no other desire but to live unknown, and to pass for contemptible in the estimation of all. Thus writes St. Francis de Sales : " But what wrong do we suffer when people have a bad opinion of us, since we ought to have such of ourselves? Perhaps we know that we are bad, and yet wish to pass off for good in the estimation of others."

## Second Sunday after Pentecost

### Morning Meditation

### *THE HEART OF JESUS LONGING FOR OUR LOVE.*

Jesus has no need of us. He is equally happy, rich and powerful, with or without our love, and yet He loves us so intensely that He desires our love as much as if man were His God. This so filled Job with astonishment that he cried out : *What is man that thou shouldst magnify him? Or why dost thou set thy heart upon him?*

I.

Jesus has no need of us. He is equally happy, rich, and powerful with or without our love; and yet, as St. Thomas says He loves us so intensely that He desires our love as much as if man were His God, and His felicity depended on that of man. This so filled holy Job with astonishment that he cried out: *What is man that thou shouldst magnify him? Or why dost thou set thy heart upon him?*—(Job vii. 17).

What! can God desire or ask with such eagerness for the love of a worm? It would have been a great favour if God had only permitted us to love Him. If a vassal were to say to his king: "Sire, I love you!" he would be considered impertinent. But what would one say if the king were to tell his vassal, "I desire you to love me"? The princes of the earth do not humble themselves to this; but Jesus, Who is the King of Heaven, is He Who with so much earnestness demands our love: *Love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart*—(Matt. xxii. 37). So pressingly does He ask for our hearts: *My son, give me thy heart*—(Prov. xxiii. 26). And if He is driven from a soul, He does not depart, but stands outside the door of the heart, and calls and knocks to be allowed to return: *I stand at the gate and knock*—(Apoc. iii. 20). Jesus beseeches the soul to open to Him, calling her sister and spouse: *Open to me, my sister, my love*—(Cant. v. 2). In short, He takes a delight in being loved by us, and is quite consoled when we say, and repeat often: "My God! My God, I love Thee!"

My dearest Redeemer, I will say to Thee with St. Augustine, Thou dost command me to love Thee, and dost threaten me with hell if I do not love Thee; but what more dreadful hell, what greater misfortune, can happen to me than to be deprived of Thy love! If, therefore, Thou desirest to terrify me, Thou shouldst threaten me only that I should live without loving Thee; for this threat alone will terrify me more than a thousand hells. If, in the midst of the flames of hell, the damned

ould burn with Thy love, O my God, hell itself would ecome a Paradise; and if, on the contrary, the Blessed Heaven could not love Thee, Paradise would become hell.

I see, indeed, my dearest Lord, that I, on account of ny sins, did deserve to be forsaken by Thy grace, and at he same time condemned to be incapable of loving Thee; but still I understand that Thou dost continue to ommand me to love Thee, and I also feel within me a reat desire to love Thee. This my desire is the gift of Thy grace, and it comes from Thee. Oh, give me also he strength necessary to put it into execution, and make me, from this day forth, say to Thee earnestly, and from he bottom of my heart, and to repeat to Thee always: My God, I love Thee! I love Thee! I love Thee!

II.

The great desire of Jesus' Heart to be loved by us is he effect of His own great love for us. He who loves necessarily desires to be loved. The heart requires the heart; love seeks love: "Why does God love, but that He may be loved," said St. Bernard; and God Himself irst said: *What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but that thou fear the Lord thy God, . . . and love him?* —(Deut. x. 12). Therefore He tells us that He is that Shepherd Who, having found the lost sheep, calls all the others to rejoice with Him: *Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost*—(Luke xv. 6). He ells us that He is that Father Who, when His lost son returns and throws himself at His feet, not only forgives him, but embraces him tenderly. Jesus tells us he hat loves Him not is condemned to death: *He that loveth not abideth in death*—(1 John iii. 14). And, on he contrary, that He takes him who loves Him and keeps possession of him: *He that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him*—(1 John iv. 16). Oh, ill not such invitations, such entreaties, such threats,

and such promises move us to love God Who so much desires to be loved by us?

Thou, then, desirest my love, O Jesus. I also desire Thine. Blot out, therefore, from Thy remembrance, O my Jesus, the offences that in past times I have committed against Thee; let us love each other henceforth forever. I will not leave Thee, and Thou wilt not leave me. Thou wilt always love me, and I will always love Thee. My dearest Saviour, in Thy merits do I place my hope; oh, do Thou make Thyself to be loved forever, and loved greatly, by a sinner who has so greatly offended Thee.

O Mary, Immaculate Virgin, do thou help me; do thou pray to Jesus for me.

## Spiritual Reading

### *CORAM SANCTISSIMO.*

ELEVENTH VISIT.

"Let us be careful," says St. Teresa, "never to be at a distance from Jesus, our beloved Shepherd, or to lose sight of Him: for the sheep which are near their shepherd are always more caressed and better fed, and always receive some choice morsels of that which he himself eats. If by chance the shepherd sleeps, still the lamb remains near him and either waits until his slumber ends, or itself wakens him; and it is then caressed with new favours."

My Redeemer, present in this Most Holy Sacrament, behold me near Thee. The only favour which I ask of Thee is fervour and perseverance in Thy love. I thank thee, O holy Faith, for thou teachest and assurest me that in the divine Sacrament of the Altar, in that

heavenly Bread, *bread* does not exist; but that my Lord Jesus Christ is all there, and that He is there for love of me. My Lord and my All, I believe that Thou art present in the Most Holy Sacrament; and though unknown to eyes of flesh, by the light of holy Faith I discern Thee in the consecrated Host, as the Monarch of Heaven and earth, and as the Saviour of the world. Ah, my most sweet Jesus, as Thou art my hope, my salvation, my strength, my consolation, so also I will that Thou shouldst be all my love, and the only object of all my thoughts, of my desires, and of my affections. I rejoice more in the supreme happiness which Thou enjoyest, and wilt enjoy for ever, than in any good thing I could ever have in time or in eternity. My supreme satisfaction is that Thou, my beloved Redeemer, art supremely happy, and that Thy happiness is infinite. Reign, reign, my Lord, over my whole soul; I give it all to Thee; do Thou ever possess it. May my will, my senses, my faculties be all servants of Thy love, and may they never in this world serve anything else than to give Thee satisfaction and glory. Such was thy life, O first lover and Mother of my Jesus! Most Holy Mary, do thou help me; do thou obtain for me the grace to live henceforward, as thou didst always live, in the happiness of belonging to God alone.

*Ejac.* My Jesus, may I be all Thine, and be Thou all mine!

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION as above, page 86.

## VISIT TO MARY.

*Blessed is the man . . . that watcheth daily at my gates, and waiteth at the posts of my doors*—(Prov. viii. 34). Blessed is he, who, like the poor who stand before the gates of the rich, is careful to seek for the alms of graces before the doors of the mercy of Mary! And thrice blessed is he, who, moreover, seeks to imitate

the virtues which he remarks in Mary, and more especially her purity and her humility.

*Ejac.* My hope, succour me!

CONCLUDING PRAYER as on page 87.

## Evening Meditation

### *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

XXIV.—HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST DESIRES NOTHING BUT JESUS CHRIST.

I.

Oh, what security is found in the hidden life for such as wish cordially to love Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ set us the example, by living hidden and despised for thirty years in a workshop. And with the same view of escaping the esteem of men, the Saints went and hid themselves in deserts and caves. It was said by St. Vincent de Paul, that love of appearing in public, and of being spoken of in terms of praise, and of hearing our conduct commended, or that people should say that we succeed admirably and work wonders, is an evil which, while it makes us unmindful of God, contaminates our best actions, and proves the most fatal drawback to the spiritual life.

Whoever, therefore, would make progress in the love of Jesus Christ, must absolutely give a death-blow to self-esteem. But how shall we inflict this blow? Behold how St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi instructs us: "That which keeps alive the appetite for self-esteem is the occupying a favourable position in the minds of all; consequently the death of self-esteem is to keep oneself hidden, so as not to be known to anyone. And till we

learn to die in this manner, we shall never be true servants of God."

O my Jesus, grant me a desire to please Thee, and make me forget all creatures and myself also. What will it profit me to be loved by the whole world if I be not loved by Thee, the only love of my soul! My Jesus, Thou camest into the world to win our hearts; if I am unable to give Thee my heart, do Thou be pleased to take it and replenish it with Thy love, and never allow me to be separated from Thee any more. I have, alas, turned my back upon Thee in the past; but now that I am conscious of the evil I have done, I grieve over it with my whole heart, and no affliction in the world can so distress me as the remembrance of the offences I have so often committed against Thee. I am consoled to think that Thou art Infinite Goodness; that Thou dost not disdain to love a sinner who loves Thee. My beloved Redeemer, O sweetest Love of my soul, I have heretofore slighted Thee, but now at least I love Thee more than myself! I offer Thee myself and all that belongs to me.

II.

In order, then, to be pleasing in the sight of God, we must avoid all ambition of appearing and of making a parade in the eyes of men. And we must shun with still greater caution the ambition of governing others. Sooner than behold this accursed ambition set foot in her convent, St. Teresa declared she would prefer to have the whole convent burnt, and all the nuns with it. So that she signified her wish, that if ever one of her Religious should be caught aiming at superiorship, she should be expelled from the community, or at least undergo perpetual confinement. St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi says, "The honour of a spiritual person consists in being put below all, and in abhorring all superiority over others." The ambition of a soul that loves God should be to excel all others in humility, according to the

counsel of St. Paul : *In humility let each esteem others better than themselves*—(Philipp. ii. 3). In a word, he that loves God must make God the sole object of his ambition.

O my dear Jesus, I have only one wish : to love Thee and to please Thee. This forms all my ambition; accept of it, and be pleased to increase it, and exterminate in me all desire of earthly goods. Thou art indeed deserving of love, and great indeed are my obligations of loving Thee. Behold me, then, I wish to be wholly Thine; and I will suffer whatever Thou pleasest, Thou Who for love of me didst die of sorrow on the Cross ! Thou wishest me to be a saint; in Thee I place my trust. And I also confide in thy protection, O Mary, great Mother of God !

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## Monday—Second Week after Pentecost

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### Morning Meditation

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### *THE SORROWFUL HEART OF JESUS.*

*My soul is sorrowful even unto death.* The principal sorrow which afflicted the Heart of Jesus so much was not the sight of the torments and infamy men were preparing for Him, but the sight of their ingratitude towards His immense love. And yet the sight of all these insults did not prevent Him from leaving us this pledge of love, Himself in the Blessed Sacrament,

I.

It is impossible to consider how afflicted the Heart of Jesus was for love of us and not pity Him. He Himself tells us that His Heart was overwhelmed with such sorrow that this alone would have sufficed to take His life away, and to make Him die of pure grief, if the virtue of His Divinity had not, by a miracle, prevented His death : *My soul is sorrowful unto death*—(Mark xiv. 34). The principal sorrow which afflicted the Heart of Jesus so much, was not the sight of the torments and infamy men were preparing for Him, but the sight of their ingratitude towards His immense love. He distinctly foresaw all the sins we should commit after all His sufferings and such a bitter and ignominious death. He foresaw, especially, the horrible insults men would offer to His adorable Heart, which He has left us in this most Holy Sacrament as a proof of His affection.

My adorable and dearest Jesus, behold at Thy feet one who has caused so much sorrow to Thy amiable Heart. O my God, how could I grieve this Heart, which has loved me so much, and has spared nothing to make itself loved by me? But console Thyself, I will say, O my Saviour, for my heart having been wounded, through Thy grace, with Thy most holy love, feels now so much regret for the offences I have committed against Thee, that it would fain die of sorrow. Oh, who will give me, my Jesus, that sorrow for my sins which Thou didst feel for them! Eternal Father, I offer Thee the sorrow and abhorrence Thy Son felt for my sins; and, for His sake, I beseech Thee to give me so great a sorrow for the offences I have committed against Thee, that I may lead an afflicted and sorrowful life at the thought of having once despised Thy friendship.

II.

O my God, what insults has not Jesus Christ received from men in this Sacrament of love! One has trampled

Him under foot, another has thrown Him into the gutter, others have availed themselves of Him to pay homage to the devil! And yet the sight of all these insults did not prevent Him leaving us this great Pledge of His love. He has a sovereign hatred of sin; but still it seeems as if His love towards us had overcome the hatred He bore to sin, in as much as He was content to permit these sacrileges, rather than to deprive souls that love Him of this Divine Food. Shall not all this suffice to make us love a Heart that has loved us so much? Has not Jesus Christ done enough to deserve our love? Ungrateful that we are, shall we still leave Jesus forsaken on the altar, as the majority of men do? And shall we not unite ourselves to those few souls who acknowledge Him, and melt with love even more than the torches melt away which burn round the tabernacle? The Heart of Jesus remains there, burning with love for us; and shall we not, in His Presence, burn with love for Jesus?

O my Jesus, do Thou give me from this day forth, such a horror of sin, that I may abhor even the lightest faults, considering that they displease Thee Who dost not deserve to be offended much or little, but dost deserve an infinite love. My beloved Lord, I now detest everything that displeases Thee, and in future I will love only Thee, and all that Thou lovest. Oh, help me, give me the strength, give me the grace to invoke Thee constantly, O my Jesus, and always to repeat to Thee this petition: My Jesus, give me Thy love! Give me Thy love! Give me Thy love! And thou, most holy Mary, obtain for me the grace to pray to thee continually, and to say to thee: O my Mother, make me love Jesus Christ.

## Spiritual Reading

### *CORAM SANCTISSIMO.*

TWELFTH VISIT.

*God is charity; and he that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him*—(1 Jo. iv. 16). He who loves Jesus dwells with Jesus, and Jesus with him. *If any one love me . . . my Father will love him; and we will come to him, and will make our abode with him*—(Jo. xiv. 23). When St. Philip Neri received the Holy Communion as Viaticum, on seeing the Most Blessed Sacrament enter his room, he exclaimed: "Behold, my Love! Behold all my Good! Hasten and give me my Love!" Let each one of us, then, say here in the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament: Behold my Love! Behold the object of all my love for my whole life and for all eternity!

Since, then, my Lord and my God, Thou hast said in the Gospel that he who loves Thee will be beloved by Thee, and that Thou wilt come and dwell in him, and never more leave him, I love Thee above every other good. Do Thou then, also, love me: for I, indeed, esteem being loved by Thee above all the kingdoms of the world. Come and fix Thy dwelling in the poor house of my soul in such a way as Thou mayest no more depart from me. Thou dost not go, if Thou art not expelled; but as I have already done this, so I may do again. Ah, never allow such a fresh act of wickedness, such horrible ingratitude to be perpetrated in the world, as that I, who have been so specially favoured by Thee, and who have received so many graces, should again drive Thee from my soul! But this might happen. I, therefore, my Lord, desire death, if it so please Thee; that by dying united to Thee, I may live united to Thee for ever. Yes, my Jesus, for this I hope. I embrace

Thee; I press Thee to my poor heart; grant that I may always love Thee, and always be beloved by Thee. Yes, my most amiable Redeemer, I will always love Thee; and Thou wilt always love me. I trust that our love will ever be mutual, O God of my soul, and this for all eternity. Amen.

*Ejac.* My Jesus, I desire always to love Thee, and always to be beloved by Thee.

Spiritual Communion as above, page 86.

### Visit to Mary.

*They that work by me shall not sin*—(Ecclus. xxiv. 30). He, says Mary, who endeavours to honour me shall persevere to the end. *They that explain me shall have life everlasting*—(Ecclus. xxiv. 31); and those who endeavour to make me known and loved by others, will be of the number of the Elect. Promise, then, that whenever you can, be it in public or in private, you will speak of the glories of Mary, and of devotion to her.

*Ejac.* Vouchsafe that I may praise thee, most sacred Virgin!

Concluding Prayer as on page 87.

## Evening Meditation

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### *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

"*Charity seeketh not her own.*"

#### XXV.—HE THAT LOVETH JESUS CHRIST SEEKS TO DETACH HIMSELF FROM EVERY CREATURE.

I.

Whoever desires to love Jesus Christ with his whole heart must banish from his heart all that is not God, but

is merely self-love. This is the meaning of those words, *seeketh not her own*; not to seek ourselves, but only what pleaseth God. And this is what God requires of us all when He says: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart*—(Matt. xxii. 37). Two things are needful to love God with our whole heart: (1) To clear it of earth; (2) To fill it with holy love. It follows that a heart in which any earthly affections linger can never belong wholly to God. St. Philip Neri said, "that as much love as we bestow on the creature, is so much taken from the Creator." In the next place, how must the earth be purged away from the heart? Truly by mortification and detachment from creatures. Some souls complain that they seek God and do not find Him; let them listen to what St. Teresa says: "Wean your heart from creatures, and then seek God, and you will find Him."

II.

The mistake is, that some indeed wish to become Saints, but after their own fashion; they would love Jesus Christ, but in their own way, without forsaking those diversions, that vanity of dress, those delicacies in food: they love God, but if they do not succeed in obtaining such or such an office, they live discontented; if, too, they happen to be touched in point of esteem, they are all on fire; if they do not recover from an illness, they lose all patience. They love God; but they refuse to let go that attachment for the riches, the honours of the world, for the vainglory of being reckoned of good family, of great learning, and better than others. Such as these practise prayer and frequent Communion; but inasmuch as they take with them hearts full of earth, they derive little profit. Our Lord does not even speak to them, for He knows that it is but a waste of words. In fact, He said as much to St. Teresa on a certain occasion: "I would speak to many souls, but the world

keeps up such a noise about their ears that My voice would never be heard by them. Oh, that they would retire a little from the world!" Whosoever, then, is full of earthly affections cannot even so much as hear the voice of God that speaks to him. But unhappy the man that continues attached to the sensible goods of this earth; he may easily become so blinded by them as one day to forsake the love of Jesus Christ; and because of his attachment to these transitory goods, he may lose God, the Infinite Good, for ever. St. Teresa said: "It is a reasonable consequence, that he who runs after perishable goods should himself perish."

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## Tuesday—Second Week after Pentecost

### Morning Meditation

*THE COMPASSIONATE HEART OF JESUS.*

O my Jesus, Thou dost pardon penitent sinners, and Thou dost not refuse to give them in this world everything in Holy Communion, and in the next world everything in eternal glory. Where, then, is a heart to be found so amiable and so compassionate as Thine, O my dearest Saviour?

I.

Where shall we find a heart more compassionate or

tender than the Heart of Jesus, or one that has greater pity for our miseries?

This pity induced Him to descend from Heaven to this earth; it made Him say that He was that Good Shepherd Who came to give His life to save His sheep. In order to obtain the pardon of our sins, He would not spare Himself, but would sacrifice Himself on the Cross, that by His sufferings He might satisfy for the punishment due to us. This pity and compassion makes Him say even now: *Why will ye die, O house of Israel? Return ye, and live*—(Ezech. xviii. 31). O men, He says, my poor children, why will you damn yourselves by flying from Me? Do you not see that by separating yourselves from Me you are hastening to eternal death? I desire not to see you lost; do not despair; as long as you wish to return, return and you shall recover your life: *Return ye and live.*

O compassionate Heart of my Jesus, have pity on me. Most sweet Jesus, have mercy on me. I say now, and beseech Thee to give me the grace always to say to Thee: "Most Sweet Jesus, have mercy on me!" Even before I offended Thee, my Redeemer, I certainly did not deserve any of the favours Thou hast bestowed upon me. Thou hast created me, Thou hast given me so much light and knowledge; and all without any merit of mine. But after I had offended Thee, I not only did not deserve Thy favour, but I deserved to be forsaken by Thee and cast into hell. Thy compassion has made Thee wait for me and preserve my life even when I had offended Thee. Thy compassion has enlightened me and offered me pardon; it has given me sorrow for my sins, and the desire of loving Thee; and now I hope from Thy mercy to remain always in Thy grace.

II.

This compassion even makes Jesus say that He is that loving Father Who, though He sees Himself despised by

His son, yet, if the son returns a penitent, He cannot reject him, but embraces him tenderly and forgets all the injuries He has received : *I will not remember all his iniquities*—(Exech. xviii. 22). It is not thus that men behave; for though they may forgive, yet they nevertheless retain the remembrance of the offence received, and feel inclined to revenge themselves; and even if they do not revenge themselves, because they fear God, at least they always feel a very great repugnance to converse or entertain themselves with those persons who have injured them.

O my Jesus, Thou dost pardon penitent sinners, and dost not refuse in this world to give them everything in Holy Communion during their life, and everything in the other world in eternal glory, without retaining the slightest repugnance towards being united for ever to the soul that offended Thee so often. Where, therefore is, to be found a Heart so amiable and compassionate as Thine, O my dearest Saviour?

O my Jesus, cease not to show Thy compassion towards me. The mercy which I would implore of Thee is that Thou wouldst grant me light and strength to be no longer ungrateful towards Thee. No, O my Love, I do not expect that Thou shouldst again forgive me if I again turn my back against Thee; this would be presumption, and would prevent Thee from showing mercy to me any more. For what pity, O Jesus, could I expect from Thee if I were so ungrateful as to despise Thy friendship again, and to separate myself from Thee. No, my Jesus, I love Thee and I will always love Thee; and this is the mercy which I hope for and seek from Thee : " Permit me not to be separated from Thee! Permit me not to be separated from Thee!"

And I beseech thee, also, O Mary, my Mother, permit me not to be ever again separated from my God.

## Spiritual Reading

### *CORAM SANCTISSIMO.*

THIRTEENTH VISIT.

*My eyes and my heart shall be there always*—(3 Kings ix. 3). Behold, Jesus has verified this beautiful promise in the Sacrament of the Altar, wherein He dwells with us night and day.

My Lord, would it not have been enough hadst Thou remained in this Sacrament only during the day, when Thou couldst have had adorers of Thy presence to keep Thee company; but why remain also the whole night, when all the churches are closed, and when men retire to their homes, leaving Thee quite alone? Ah, yes! I already understand Thee: love has made Thee our Prisoner: the excessive love which Thou bearest us has so bound Thee down on earth that neither night nor day canst Thou leave us. Ah, most amiable Saviour, this refinement of love alone should oblige all men ever to stay near Thee in the holy Tabernacle, and to remain with Thee until forcibly compelled to leave Thee; and when they do so, they should all leave at the foot of the altar their hearts and affections inflamed with love towards an Incarnate God Who remains alone and enclosed in a Tabernacle, all eyes to see and provide for them in their necessities, and all heart to love them, and Who awaits the coming day to be again visited by His beloved souls.

Yes, my Jesus, I will please Thee; I consecrate my whole will and all my affections to Thee. O infinite Majesty of God, Thou hast left Thyself in this divine Sacrament, not only that Thou mightest be present with us and near us, but principally to communicate Thyself to Thy beloved souls. But, Lord, who will presume to approach Thee to feed upon Thy Flesh? And who, on

the other hand, can keep at a distance from Thee? For this purpose Thou concealest Thyself in the consecrated Host, that Thou mayest enter into us and possess our hearts. Thou burnest with the desire of being received by us, and Thou rejoicest in being united with us. Come, then, my Jesus, come; I desire to receive Thee within myself, that Thou mayest be the God of my heart, and of my will. All that is within me I yield, my dear Redeemer, to Thy love; satisfactions, pleasures, self-will, all I give up to Thee. O Love, O God of love, reign, triumph over my entire self; destroy and sacrifice all in me which is mine and not Thine. Permit not, O my Love, that my soul, which, having received Thee in Holy Communion, is filled with the Majesty of God, should again attach itself to creatures. I love Thee, my God; I love Thee; and I will love Thee alone and forever.

*Ejac.* Draw me by the chains of Thy love!

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION as above, page 86.

## VISIT TO MARY.

St. Bernard exhorts us, saying: "Let us seek for grace, and let us seek it through Mary." "She," says St. Peter Damian, "is the treasurer of divine graces." She can enrich us, and she desires to do so. She therefore invites and calls us, saying: *Whosoever is a little one, let him come to me*—(Prov. ix. 4). Most amiable Lady, most exalted Lady, most gracious Lady, look on a poor sinner who recommends himself to thee, and who places all his confidence in thee.

*Ejac.* We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God!

CONCLUDING PRAYER as on page 87.

## Evening Meditation

### *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

XXVI.—HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST SEEKS TO DETACH HIMSELF FROM EVERY CREATURE.

I.

St. Augustine informs us that Tiberius Cæsar desired that the Roman Senate should enrol Jesus Christ among the rest of their gods; but the Senate refused to do so on the ground that He was too proud a God and would be worshipped alone without any companion. It is quite true; God will be alone the object of our adoration and love; not indeed from pride, but because it is His just due, and because too, of the love He bears us. For as He Himself loves us exceedingly, He desires in return all our love; and He is therefore jealous of anyone else sharing the affections of our hearts, of which He desires to be the sole possessor: "Jesus is a jealous lover," says St. Jerome; and He is unwilling, therefore, that we should fix our affections on anything but Himself. And whenever He beholds any created object taking a share of our hearts, He looks on it, as it were with jealousy, as the Apostle St. James says, because He will not endure a rival, but will remain the sole object of all our love: *Do you think that the Scripture saith in vain: To envy doth the Spirit covet which dwelleth in you*—(James iv. 5). The Lord, in the sacred Canticles, praises His spouse, saying: *My sister, my spouse, is a garden enclosed*—(Cant. iv. 12). He calls her *a garden enclosed* because the soul which is His spouse keeps her heart shut against every earthly love, in order to preserve all for Jesus Christ alone. And does Jesus Christ, perchance, not deserve all our love? Ah, too much, too much has He deserved it, both for His own goodness and for His love towards us. The Saints knew

this well, and for this reason St. Francis de Sales said : " Were I conscious of one fibre in my heart that did not belong to God, I would forthwith tear it out."

II.

David longed to have wings free from all lime of worldly affections, in order to fly away and repose in God : *Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest?*—(Ps. liv. 7). Many souls would wish to see themselves released from every earthly trammel to fly to God, and would in reality make lofty flights in the way of sanctity, if they would but detach themselves from everything in this world; but whereas they retain some little inordinate affection, and will not use violence with themselves to get rid of it, they remain always languishing in their misery, without ever so much as taking a single forward step. St. John of the Cross said : " The soul that remains with her affections attached to anything, however small, will, notwithstanding the many virtues she may possess, never arrive at Divine union; for it signifies little whether the bird be tied by a slight thread or a thick one; since, however slight it may be, provided she does not break it, she remains always bound, unable to fly. Oh, what a pitiful thing it is to see certain souls, rich in spiritual exercises, in virtues and Divine favours yet, because they are not bold enough to break off some trifling attachment, they cannot attain to Divine union. For this union there is needed only one strong and resolute flight to break effectually that fatal thread, for when once the soul is emptied of all affections to creatures, God cannot help communicating Himself wholly to her."

# Wednesday—Second Week after Pentecost

## Morning Meditation

### *THE GRATEFUL HEART OF JESUS.*

Jesus has offered for us all His merits, all His sufferings, all His ignominies, all His Blood and His very life; so that we are under not one, but infinite obligations to love Him. Alas! we are grateful towards the very animals. How can it be that we are so ungrateful towards God?

I.

The Heart of Jesus is so grateful, that our Lord cannot behold the most trifling works done for His love—our smallest word spoken for His glory, a single good thought directed towards pleasing Him—without giving to each its own reward. He is, besides, so grateful that he always returns a hundredfold for one: *You shall receive a hundredfold*—(Matt. xix. 29).

Men, when they are grateful and recompense any benefit done to them, recompense it only once; they, as it were, divest themselves of all the obligation, and then they think no more of it. Jesus Christ does not act thus with us, for He not only recompenses a hundredfold in this life every action that we perform to please Him, but in the next life He recompenses it an infinite number of times throughout eternity. And who will be so negligent as not to do as much as he can to please this most grateful Heart?

Tell me, O Jesus, what Thou wishest me to do, for I am ready to do everything with Thy help. I believe that Thou hast created me. Thou hast given Thy Blood and Thy life for the love of me. I believe also that for my sake Thou dost remain in the Blessed Sacrament; I thank Thee for it, O my Love. Oh, permit me not to be ungrateful in future for so many benefits and proofs of Thy love. Oh, bind me, unite me to Thy Heart, and permit me not, during the years that remain to me, to offend Thee or grieve Thee any more. I have displeased Thee too much, O my Jesus, it is time that I should love Thee now. Oh, that those many years I have lost would return! But they will return no more, and the life that remains for me may be short; but whether it be short or long, my God, I desire to spend it all in loving Thee, my sovereign Good, Who dost deserve an eternal and infinite love.

O Mary, my Mother, let me never again be ungrateful to thy Son. Pray to Jesus for me.

II.

But, O my God, how do men try to please Jesus Christ? Or rather, I will say, how can we be so ungrateful towards this our Saviour? If He had shed only a single drop of Blood, or one tear for our salvation, we should be under infinite obligation to Him; because this drop and this tear would have been of infinite value in the sight of God towards obtaining for us every grace. But Jesus would employ for us every moment of His life. He has offered for us all His merits, all His sufferings, all His ignominies, all His Blood, and His life; so that we are under not one, but infinite, obligations to love Him.

But, alas! we are grateful even towards animals: if a little dog shows us any sign of affection, it seems to constrain us to love it. How, then, can we be so ungrateful towards God? It would seem as if God's

benefits to men change their nature, and become ill-usage; for, instead of gratitude and love, they earn only offences and injuries. Do Thou, O Lord, enlighten these ungrateful ones, to know the love Thou bearest them.

O my beloved Jesus, behold at Thy feet an ungrateful sinner. I have been grateful, indeed, towards creatures; but to Thee alone I have been ungrateful—to Thee, Who hast died for me, and hast done the utmost that Thou couldst do to oblige me to love Thee. But the thought that I have to do with a Heart full of goodness and infinite in mercy, of One Who proclaims that He forgives all the offences of the sinner who repents and loves Him, consoles me and gives me courage. My dearest Jesus, I have in times past offended Thee and despised Thee; but now I love Thee more than everything—more than myself.

## Spiritual Reading

### *CORAM SANCTISSIMO.*

#### FOURTEENTH VISIT.

Most amiable Jesus, I hear Thee say from this Tabernacle, in which Thou art present, *This is my rest for ever and ever; here will I dwell for I have chosen it* —(Ps. cxxxi. 14). Since then, Thou hast chosen Thy dwelling on our altars in the midst of us, remaining there in the most Holy Sacrament, and since Thy love for us makes Thee there find Thy repose, it is but just that our hearts also should ever dwell with Thee in affection, and should find all pleasure and repose in Thee. Blessed are you, O loving souls, who can find no sweeter repose in the world than in remaining near to your Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament! And blessed shall I be, my Lord, if from this time forward I find no greater delight

than in remaining always in Thy presence, or in always thinking of Thee, Who in the Most Holy Sacrament art always thinking of me and of my welfare.

Ah, my Lord, and why have I lost so many years in which I have not loved Thee? O miserable years, I curse you; and I bless thee, O infinite patience of my God, for having for so many years borne with me, though so ungrateful to Thy love. And still, notwithstanding this ingratitude, Thou waitest for me; and why, my God, why? It is, that one day, overcome by Thy mercies and by Thy love, I may yield wholly to Thee. Lord, I will no longer resist, I will no longer be ungrateful. It is but just that I should consecrate to Thee the time, be it long or short, which I have still to live. I hope for Thy help, O my Jesus, to become entirely Thine. Thou didst favour me so much when I fled from Thee and despised Thy love; how much more may I hope that Thou wilt favour me, now that I seek and desire to love Thee? Give me, then, the grace to love Thee, O God worthy of infinite love. I love Thee with my whole heart; I love Thee above all things: I love Thee more than myself, more than my life. I am sorry for having offended Thee, O infinite Goodness. Pardon me, and with Thy pardon grant me the grace to love Thee much in this life until death, and in the next life for all eternity. O Almighty God, show the world the greatness of Thy power, in the prodigy of a soul ungrateful as mine has been, becoming one of Thy greatest lovers. Do this by Thy merits, my Jesus. It is my ardent desire, and I resolve thus to love Thee during my whole life. Do Thou, Who inspirest me with this desire, give me also the strength to accomplish it.

*Ejac.* My Jesus, I thank Thee for having waited for me until now.

Spiritual Communion as above, page 86.

### Visit to Mary.

St. Germanus, addressing the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, says : " No one is saved but through thee; no one is delivered from evils but through thee; there is no one on whom any gift is bestowed but through thee." Therefore, my Lady and my hope, if thou dost not help me I am lost, and shall be unable to bless thee in Heaven. But Lady, I hear all the Saints say that thou never abandonest those who have recourse to thee. He only is lost who has not recourse to thee. I, then, miserable creature that I am, have recourse to thee, and in thee place all my hopes.

*Ejac.* Mary is my whole confidence; she is the whole ground of my hope!

Concluding Prayer as on page 87.

## Evening Meditation

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## *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

### XXVII.—HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST SEEKS TO DETACH HIMSELF FROM EVERY CREATURE.

I.

He who would possess God entirely must give himself up entirely to God : *My beloved to me, and I to him* —(Cant. ii. 16), says the Sacred Spouse. My beloved has given Himself entirely to me, and I give myself entirely to Him. The love which Jesus Christ bears us causes Him to desire all our love; and without all He is not satisfied. On this account we find St. Teresa thus writing to the prioress of one of her convents : " Endeavour to train souls to total detachment from

everything created, because they are to be trained for the spouses of a King so jealous that He would have them even forget themselves." St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi took a little book of devotion from one of her novices, merely because she observed that she was too much attached to it. Many souls acquit themselves of the duty of prayer, of visiting the Blessed Sacrament, of frequenting Holy Communiõn; but nevertheless they make little or no progress in perfection, and all because they keep some fondness for something in their heart; and if they persist in living thus, they will not only be always miserable, but run the risk of losing all.

II.

We must, therefore, beseech Almighty God, with David, to rid our heart of all earthly attachments: *Create a clean heart in me, O God*—(Ps. l. 12). Otherwise we can never be wholly His. He has given us to understand very plainly that whoever will not renounce everything in this world cannot be His disciple: *Every one of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth, cannot be my disciple*—(Luke xiv. 33). For this reason the ancient Fathers of the Desert were accustomed first to put this question to any youth who desired to associate himself with them: "Dost thou bring an empty heart that the Holy Spirit may fill it?" Our Lord said the same thing to St. Gertrude when she besought Him to signify what He wished of her: "I wish nothing else He said, but to find a heart devoid of creatures." We must therefore say to God with great resolution and courage: O Lord, I prefer Thee to all; to health, to riches, to honours and dignities, to applause, to learning, to consolations, to high hopes, to desires, and even to the very graces and gifts which I may receive of Thee! In short, I prefer Thee to every good which is not Thee, O my God! Whatever benefit Thou grantest me, O my God, nothing besides Thyself will satisfy me. I desire Thee alone, and nothing else.

# Thursday—Second Week after Pentecost

## Morning Meditation

### *THE DESPISED HEART OF JESUS.*

There is no greater sorrow for a heart that loves than to see its love despised; and all the more when on one side the love has been great, and on the other the ingratitude has been great. Jesus Christ has offered for us His sufferings, His Blood, His very life, and we have returned Him ill-treatment, contempt, and injuries.

I.

There is no greater sorrow for a heart that loves than to see its love despised; and so much the more when the proofs given of this love have been great, and, on the other hand, the ingratitude great. If every human being were to renounce all his goods, and to go and live in the desert, to live on herbs, to sleep on the bare earth, to macerate himself with penances, and at last give himself up to be martyred for Christ's sake, what recompense could he render for the sufferings, the Blood, the life that this great Son of God has given for his sake? If we were to sacrifice ourselves every moment unto death, we should certainly not recompense in the smallest degree the love Jesus Christ has shown us by giving Himself to us in the Most Holy Sacrament. Only conceive that God should conceal Himself under the species of bread to become the Food of one of His creatures! But, O my

God, what recompense and gratitude do men render to Jesus Christ? What but ill-treatment, contempt of His laws and His maxims,—injuries such as they would not commit against their enemy, or their slave, or the greatest villain upon earth.

O Heart of Jesus, abyss of mercy and love, how is it that, at the sight of the goodness Thou has shown me, and of my ingratitude, I do not die of sorrow? Thou, O my Saviour, after having given me my being, hast given me all Thy Blood and Thy life, offering Thyself up for my sake to ignominy and death; and, not content with this, Thou hast invented the mode of sacrificing Thyself every day for me in the Holy Eucharist, not refusing to expose Thyself to the injuries Thou dost receive, and which Thou didst foresee in this Sacrament of love. O my God, how can I see myself so ungrateful to Thee without dying with confusion! O Lord, put an end, I pray Thee, to my ingratitude, by wounding my heart with Thy love, and making me entirely Thine.

II.

And can we think upon all the injuries which Jesus Christ has received, and still receives every day, and not feel sorrow for them, and not endeavour by our love to recompense the infinite love of His Divine Heart—this Divine Heart which ever remains with us in the Most Holy Sacrament, inflamed with the same love towards us, and anxious to communicate every good gift to us, and to give Itself entirely to us, ever ready to receive and pardon us whenever we return? *Him that cometh to me, I will not cast out*—(Jo. vi. 37). We have been accustomed to hear of the Creation, Incarnation, Redemption, of Jesus born in a stable, of Jesus dead on the Cross. O my God, if we knew that another man had conferred on us any of these benefits, we could not help loving him! It seems that God alone has, so to say, this misfortune amongst men, that, though He

has done His utmost to make them love Him, yet He cannot attain this end, and, instead of being loved, He sees Himself despised and neglected. All this arises from the forgetfulness of men for the love of God.

Ah, dear Jesus, remember the Blood and tears Thou hast shed for me, and forgive me. Let not all Thy sufferings be lost upon me. But though Thou didst see how ungrateful and unworthy of Thy love I have been, yet Thou didst not cease to love me even when I did not love Thee, nor even desire that Thou shouldst love me; how much more, then, may I not hope for Thy love, now that I desire and sigh after nothing but to love Thee, and to be loved by Thee. Oh, do Thou fully satisfy this my desire; or rather, this Thy desire, for it is Thou that hast given it to me. Grant that this day may be the day of my thorough conversion; so that I may begin to love Thee, and may never cease to love Thee, my sovereign Good. Make me in everything die to myself in order that I may live only to Thee, and that I may always burn with Thy love. O Mary, thy heart was the blessed altar that was always on fire with Divine love: my dearest Mother, make me like to thee; obtain this from thy Son, Who delights in honouring thee, by denying thee nothing that Thou askest of Him.

## Spiritual Reading

### *CORAM SANCTISSIMO.*

#### FIFTEENTH VISIT.

*I am come to cast fire on the earth; and what will I but that it be kindled?*—(Luke xii. 49). Father Francis Olimpio, the Theatine, used to say that there was nothing on earth which enkindled such ardent flames of Divine love in the hearts of men as the Most Holy

Sacrament of the Altar. Hence our Lord showed Himself to St. Catherine of Sienna, in the Blessed Sacrament, as a furnace of love, from which issued forth torrents of divine flames, spreading themselves over the whole earth; so much so, indeed, that the Saint, in perfect astonishment, wondered how it was possible that men could live without burning with love for such love on the part of God towards them.

My Jesus, make me burn with the desire of Thee; grant that all my thoughts, and sighs, and desires, and seekings may be for Thee alone. Oh, happy should I be did this Thy heavenly fire fully possess me, and as I advance in years, gradually consume all earthly affections in me!

O, Divine Word! O, my own Jesus! I see Thee all sacrificed, all annihilated, and so to say, destroyed on the Altar, for my love. It is, then, but right that, as Thou sacrificest Thyself as a Victim for love of me, I at least should consecrate myself wholly to Thee. Yes, my God and my sovereign Lord, I now sacrifice to Thee my whole soul, my entire self, my whole will and my whole life. I unite this poor sacrifice of mine, O Eternal Father, to the infinite Sacrifice of Himself which Jesus, Thy Son and my Saviour, once offered to Thee on the Cross, and which He now offers to Thee so many times every day on our Altars. Accept it, then, through the merits of Jesus Christ; and grant me the grace to renew it every day of my life, and to die sacrificing my whole self to Thy honour. I desire the grace granted to so many Martyrs, to die for Thy love. But if I am unworthy of so great a grace, grant, at least, my Lord, that I may sacrifice my life to Thee, together with my entire will, by accepting the death which Thou sendest me. Lord, I desire this grace; I desire to die with the intention of honouring and pleasing Thee thereby; and from this moment I sacrifice my life to Thee; and I offer Thee my death, when or wheresoever it may take place.

Spiritual Communion as above, page 86.

### Visit to Mary.

Allow me also, my most sweet Queen, to call thee, with thine own St. Bernard, "the whole ground of my hope," and to say with St. John Damascene, "I have placed my whole hope in thee." Thou hast to obtain for me the forgiveness of my sins; thou, perseverance until death; thou, deliverance from Purgatory. All who are saved obtain salvation through thee: thou, then, O Mary, hast to save me: "He will be saved whom thou willest," says St. Bonaventure. Will, then, my salvation, and I shall be saved. But thou savest all who invoke thee; behold, then, I invoke thee, and say:

*Ejac.* O salvation of those who invoke thee, save me!

Concluding Prayer as on page 87.

## Evening Meditation

## *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

### XXVIII.—HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST SEEKS TO DETACH HIMSELF FROM EVERY CREATURE.

#### I.

When the heart is detached from creatures, Divine love immediately enters and fills it. Moreover, St. Teresa said: "As soon as the evil occasions are removed, the heart forthwith turns herself to love God." Yes, for the human heart cannot exist without loving; it must either love the Creator or creatures: if it does not love creatures, then assuredly it will love God. In short, we must leave all in order to gain all. "All for all," says Thomas à Kempis. As long as St. Teresa cherished a certain affection, though pure, towards one

of her relations, she did not wholly belong to God; but when afterwards she summoned courage, and resolutely cut off the attachment, then she deserved to hear these words from Jesus: "Now, Teresa, thou art all Mine, and I am all thine." One heart is quite too small to love this God, so loving and so lovely, and Who merits an infinite love; and shall we then think of dividing this one little heart of ours between creatures and God? The Venerable Lewis da Ponte felt ashamed to speak thus to God: "O Lord, I love Thee above all things, above riches, above honours, friends, relations!" for it seemed to him as much as to say: "O Lord, I love Thee more than dust and smoke and the worms of the earth!"

II.

The Prophet Jeremias says that the Lord is all goodness towards him who seeks Him: *The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh him*—(Lam. iii. 25). But he understands it of a soul that seeks God alone! O blessed loss! O blessed gain! To lose worldly goods, which cannot satisfy the heart and are soon gone, in order to gain the sovereign and eternal Good, which is God! It is related that a pious hermit, one day while a king was hunting through the woods, began to run to and fro as if in search of something. The king, observing him thus occupied, inquired of him who he was and what he was doing; the hermit replied: "And may I ask your majesty what you are engaged about in this desert?" The king made answer: "I am going in pursuit of game." And the hermit replied: "I, too, am going in pursuit of God." With these words he went his way. During the present life this must likewise be our only thought, our only purpose, to go in search of God in order to love Him, and in search of His will in order to fulfil it, ridding our heart of all love of creatures. And whenever some worldly good presents itself to our imaginations to solicit our affection, let us be ready with

this answer: "I have despised the kingdom of this world, and all the charms of this life for the sake of the love of my Lord Jesus Christ." And what else are all the dignities and grandeurs of this world but smoke, filth, and vanity, which all disappear at death? Blessed he who can say: "My Jesus, I have left all for Thy love; Thou art my only Love; Thou alone art sufficient for me."

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# Friday—Second Week after Pentecost

*Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.*

## Morning Meditation

### *THE FAITHFUL HEART OF JESUS.*

The faithfulness of the Heart of Jesus gives us confidence to hope for all things although we deserve nothing. *God is faithful*, says St. Paul. Oh, how faithful is the beautiful Heart of Jesus towards those He calls to His love!

I.

Oh, how faithful is the beautiful Heart of Jesus towards those He calls to His love: *He is faithful who hath called you, who also will perform*—(1 Thess. v. 24). The faithfulness of God gives us confidence to hope all

things, although we deserve nothing. If we have driven God from our heart, let us open the door to Him, and He will immediately enter, according to the promise He has made : *If any one open to me the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him*—(Apoc. iii. 20). If we wish for graces, let us ask for them of God, in the Name of Jesus Christ, and He has promised us that we shall obtain them : *If you shall ask the Father anything in my name, He will give it you*—(Jo. xvi. 23). If we are tempted, let us trust in His merits, and He will not permit our enemies to strive with us beyond our strength : *God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able*—(1 Cor. x. 13). Oh, how much better is it to have to do with God than with men ! How often do men promise and then fail, either because they tell lies in making their promises, or because, after having made the promise, they change their minds : *God is not as man*," says the Holy Spirit, " *that he should lie ; or as the son of man, that he should be changed*—(Numb. xxiii. 19).

I know my ingratitude, O my Jesus, and I abhor it. I know that Thou art infinite Goodness, Who deservest an infinite love, especially from me, whom Thou hast so much loved, even after all the offences I have committed against Thee. Unhappy me if I should damn myself; the graces Thou hast vouchsafed to me, and the proofs of the singular affection which Thou hast shown me, would be, O God, the hell of hells to me. Ah, no, my Love, have pity on me; suffer me not to forsake Thee again, and then by damning myself, as I should deserve, continue to repay in hell with injuries and hatred the love that Thou hast borne me. O loving and faithful Heart of Jesus, inflame, I beseech Thee, my miserable heart, so that it may burn with love for Thee, as Thine does for me. My Jesus, it seems to me that now I love Thee, but I love Thee but little. Make me love Thee exceedingly, and remain faithful to Thee until death. I ask of Thee this grace, together with that of always praying to Thee for it. Grant that I may die rather

than ever betray Thee again. O Mary, my Mother, help me to be faithful to thy Son.

II.

God cannot be unfaithful to His promises, because, being Truth itself, He cannot lie; nor can He change His mind, because all that He wills is just and right. He has promised to receive all that come to Him, to give help to him that asks it, to love him that loves Him; and shall He, then, not do it? *Hath he said, then, and will he not do it?* Oh, that we were as faithful with God as He is with us! Oh, how often have we, in times past, promised Him to be His, to serve Him and to love Him; and then have betrayed Him, and, renouncing His service, have sold ourselves as slaves to the devil! Oh, let us beseech Him to give us strength to be faithful to Him for the future! Oh, how blessed shall we be if we are faithful to Jesus Christ in the few things that He commands us to do; He will, indeed, be faithful in remunerating us with infinitely great rewards; and He will declare to us what He has promised to His faithful servants: *Well done, good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord*—(Matt. xxv. 21).

Oh, that I had been as faithful towards Thee, my dearest Redeemer, as Thou hast been faithful to me. Whenever I have opened my heart to Thee, Thou hast entered in, to forgive me and to receive me into Thy favour; whenever I have called Thee, Thou hast hastened to my assistance. Thou hast been faithful with me, but I have been exceedingly unfaithful towards Thee. I have promised Thee my love, and then have many times refused it to Thee; as if Thou, my God, Who hast created and redeemed me, wert less worthy of being

loved than Thy creatures and those miserable pleasures for which I have forsaken Thee. Forgive me, O my Jesus.

## Spiritual Reading

### *CORAM SANCTISSIMO.*

SIXTEENTH VISIT.

Had men but always recourse to the Most Blessed Sacrament to seek from it the remedy of their ills, they certainly would not be as miserable as they are. The Prophet Jeremias, lamenting, exclaimed: *Is there no balm in Galaad, or is there no physician there?*—(Jer. viii. 22). Galaad, a mountain of Arabia, rich in aromatical spices, according to the Venerable Bede, is a figure of Jesus Christ, Who, in this Sacrament, keeps in readiness all the remedies of our woes. Why, then, our Redeemer seems to ask, do you complain of your misfortunes, O ye sons of Adam, when you have the physician and the remedy for them all in this Sacrament? *Come to me, and I will refresh you*—(Matt. xi. 28). I will, then, address Thee, O Lord, in the words of the sisters of Lazarus: *Behold, he whom thou lovest is sick*—(Jo. xi. 3). Lord, I am that miserable creature whom Thou lovest; my soul is all wounded by the sins I have committed; my divine Physician, I come to Thee that Thou mayest heal me; if Thou wilt, Thou canst cure me; *Heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee.* Draw me wholly to Thyself, my most sweet Jesus, by the all-winning attractions of Thy love. Far rather would I be bound to Thee than become the lord of the whole earth. I desire nothing else in the world but to love Thee. I have but little to give Thee; but could I gain possession of all the kingdoms of the world, I would do so, that I might

renounce them all for Thy love. For Thee, then, I renounce what I can; I give up all relatives, all comforts, all pleasures, and even spiritual consolations; for Thee I renounce my liberty and my will. On Thee I desire to bestow all my love. I love Thee, infinite Goodness; I love Thee more than myself, and I hope to love Thee for all eternity.

*Ejac.* My Jesus, I give myself to Thee; do Thou accept me!

Spiritual Communion as above, page 86.

### Visit to Mary.

My Lady, thou didst say to St. Bridget: "However much a man sins, if he returns to me with a real purpose of amendment, I am instantly ready to welcome him; neither do I pay attention to the greatness of his sins, but to the intention alone with which he comes. I do not disdain to anoint and heal his wounds; for I am called, and truly am, the Mother of Mercy." Since, then, thou hast both the power and the will to heal me, behold I have recourse to thee, O heavenly physician; heal the many wounds of my soul; with a single word addressed by thee to thy Son I shall be restored.

*Ejac.* O Mary, have pity on me!

Concluding Prayer as on page 87.

## Evening Meditation

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### *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

XXIX.—HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST SEEKS TO DETACH HIMSELF FROM EVERY CREATURE.

I.

When once the love of God takes full possession of a soul, she of her own accord (supposing always, of course, the assistance of Divine grace) strives to divest herself of everything that could prove a hindrance to her belonging wholly to God. Saint Francis de Sales remarks that when a house catches fire all the furniture is thrown out of the window; meaning thereby, that when a person gives himself entirely to God, he needs no persuasion of preachers or confessors, but of his own accord seeks to get rid of every earthly affection. Father Segneri the Younger called Divine love a robber, which happily despoils us of all, that we may come into the possession of God alone. A certain man, of respectable position in life, having renounced everything in order to become poor for the love of Jesus Christ was questioned by a friend how he fell into such a state of poverty; he took from his pocket a small volume of the Gospels, and said: "Behold, this is what has stripped me of all." The Holy Spirit says: *If a man shall give all the substance of his house for love, he shall despise it as nothing* —(Cant. viii. 7). And when a soul fixes her whole love in God, she despises all, wealth, pleasures, dignities, territories, kingdoms, and all her longing is after God alone; she says again and again: "My God, I wish for Thee only, and nothing more." St. Francis de Sales writes: "The pure love of God consumes everything which is not God, to convert all into itself; for whatever we do for the love of God is love."

II.

The Sacred Spouse said : *He brought me into the cellar of wine, he set in order charity in me*—(Cant. ii. 4). This cellar of wine, writes St. Teresa, is Divine love, which, on taking possession of a soul, so perfectly inebriates it, as to make it forgetful of everything created. A person intoxicated is as it were dead in his senses; he neither sees, nor hears, nor speaks : and so it happens to the soul inebriated with Divine love. She has no longer any sense of the things of the world; she wishes to think only of God, to speak only of God; she recognises no other motive in all her actions but to love and to please God. In the Sacred Canticles the Lord forbids them to awake His beloved, who sleeps : *Stir not up, nor make the beloved to awake, till she please* —(Cant. ii. 7). This blessed sleep, enjoyed by souls espoused to Jesus Christ, says St. Basil, is nothing else than " the utter oblivion of all things," a virtuous and voluntary forgetfulness of every created thing, in order to be occupied solely with God, and to able to exclaim with St. Francis : " *Deus meus et omnia*—My God and my All !" My God, what are riches, and dignities, and the goods of this world, compared with Thee ! Thou art my All, and my every Good. " My God and my All !" Thomas à Kempis writes : " Oh, sweet word ! It speaks enough for him who understands it; and to him who loves, it is most delicious to repeat again and again : My God and my All ! My God and my All !"

# Saturday—Second Week after Pentecost

## Morning Meditation

### *MARY IS OUR MOTHER OF PERPETUAL SUCCOUR.*

St. Paul wrote of our Lord Jesus Christ : *For in that he himself hath suffered and been tempted he is able to succour them also that are tempted*—(Heb. ii. 18). So, too, had the Mother of Jesus to be tried with many and terrible sufferings in order that, as St. Alphonsus says, she might be in all things like to her Son, and be able to succour and console the miserable.

I.

The Blessed Mother of God well deserves the glorious and beautiful title of *Perpetual Succour.* She has earned this title because of her great sufferings for our sake. "In all things like to her Divine Son is His Mother Mary; and as she is the Mother of Mercy, she rejoices when she succours and consoles the miserable." —(St. Alphonsus). But ere she could rejoice as the Consoler and Perpetual Succour of men, she had, like her Divine Son, to be tried, to be tempted, and to suffer. St. Paul wrote of Our Lord Jesus Christ : *For in that he himself hath suffered and been tempted he is able to succour them also that are tempted.* In order to win for Himself the glorious Name of Jesus, and to succour and save mankind, our Divine Lord underwent great

sufferings, even to the shedding of the last drop of His precious Blood. So, too, had the Divine Mother to be tried with many and terrible sufferings in order to share with her Son in the work of the Redemption of the human race, and win for herself the glorious name and title of the world's Perpetual Succour.

The Divine Mother suffered in her Child. It is in the sufferings of the child every true and loving mother suffers most keenly. Mary knew the Scriptures well, and from her earliest days of childhood in the Temple kept pondering them in her heart, especially all that concerned the coming of the Redeemer, His life and death. She knew better than Prophet and Priest what the Messias would have to do and to suffer that He might enter into His glory, and so from the hour the Archangel saluted her: *Hail, full of grace!* and she was overshadowed by by Holy Ghost and the Word was made Flesh in her womb, sorrows, too, overshadowed her, and filled her with the saddest forebodings. The Angel of her joys soon became the messenger of woe to carry the awful vision of the Cross and Nails before the eyes of Child and Mother from the manger of Bethlehem to the Hill of Calvary.

O my afflicted Mother, thou didst weep bitterly over thy Son Who died for my salvation; but what will thy tears avail me if I am lost? By thy merits, then, obtain for me true contrition for my sins and a real amendment of life. If Jesus and thou, being so innocent, have suffered so much for love of me, obtain that at least I may suffer something for your love. "O Lady," I will say with St. Bonaventure, "if I have offended thee, in justice wound my heart: if I have served thee I ask for wounds as my reward. It is shameful to see my Lord wounded, and thee wounded, and myself without a wound! Ah, cease not, O Advocate of sinners, to assist my soul in the midst of the combat. I invoke thy Son and thee to succour me in life and in death. O Jesus and Mary, to you I recommend my soul."

II.

How plainly and eloquently does the Picture of the Mother of Perpetual Succour tell of the Mother's sufferings in her Child. There we see only one sufferer as it were, so united and identified are both in their sorrows. The horrid visions that afflict His eyes afflict her soul, and every quiver of pain in the limbs of the Divine Lamb in her arms makes her heart tremble and agonise. The loving St. Alphonsus says : " From the beginning of His life Jesus had always before His eyes the sad vision of all the torments He would have to endure before He left this earth, as He predicted by the mouth of the Prophet : *My sorrow is continually before me*—(Ps. xxxvii. 18). So, then, my Redeemer, throughout Thy life, I shall find Thee nowhere but on the Cross ! Even while sleeping, says Bellarmine, the vision of the Cross was present to the Heart of Jesus. " Christ had His Cross always before His eyes. When He slept, His Heart watched; nor was it ever free from the vision of the Cross."

So likewise had the Divine Mother to endure her perpetual agony that in all things, she, the Co-Redemptrix of the world, might be like to her Divine Son, the Redeemer. Mary revealed to St. Bridget that when she suckled her Child she thought of the vinegar and gall; when swathing Him, she thought of the cords with which He was to be bound; when bearing Him in her arms, of the Cross to which He would be nailed; when He was sleeping, of His Death. As often as she put on Him His garments, she reflected how they would be torn from His bleeding body one day; and when she beheld His feet and hands, she thought of the nails that would one day pierce them, and then, as Mary said to St. Bridget, " my eyes filled with tears and my heart was tortured with grief." Thus truly had Mary to suffer and to be tempted. like her Divine Son, so as to be able to succour them also that are tempted, and to merit the glorious title of the world's Perpetual Succour. Mary is now all-powerful in Heaven, ever acting as our Advocate and interceding for

us, says Blessed Amadeus, with her most powerful prayers, for she well sees our miseries and our dangers, and, as our most clement and sweet Lady, compassionates and succours us with a Mother's love.

O Mother of Perpetual Succour, grant that I may always invoke thy most powerful name, for thy name is help in life, salvation in death. I thank the Lord for having given thee for my good this name so sweet, so amiable, and so powerful. But merely to pronounce thy name is not enough for me. I wish to do so out of love. I wish that love may remind me to call thee always *Mother of Perpetual Succour.*

## Spiritual Reading

### *CORAM SANCTISSIMO.*

SEVENTEENTH VISIT.

Loving souls can find no greater delight than to be in the company of those whom they love. If we, then, love Jesus Christ much, behold we are now in His presence. Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament sees us and hears us: shall we, then, say nothing to Him? Let us console ourselves in His company; let us rejoice in His glory, and in the love which so many enamoured souls bear Him in the Most Holy Sacrament. Let us desire that all should love Jesus in the Holy Sacrament, and consecrate their hearts to Him; at least let us consecrate all our affections to Him. He should be all our love and our whole desire. Father Salesius, of the Society of Jesus, felt consolation in only speaking of the Most Blessed Sacrament; he could never visit It enough. When called to the parlour, or on returning to his room, or going about the house, he always profited by these occasions to repeat his visits to his beloved Lord; so

much so, that it was remarked that scarcely an hour of the day passed without his visiting Him. At length he obtained the favour of dying by the hands of heretics while defending the truth of the Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament.

Oh, had I but the happiness to die for so noble a cause as the defence of this Sacrament, in which, O most amiable Jesus, Thou hast taught us the tenderness of the love which Thou bearest us! But since, my Lord, Thou workest so many miracles in this Sacrament, work this one also; draw my entire self to Thee. Thou indeed desirest that I should be all Thine, and Thou dost also, indeed, deserve that I should be so. Give me the strength to love Thee with all the affection of my soul. Give the goods of this world to whomsoever Thou willest. I renounce them all. I sigh after and desire Thy love alone; this alone do I now and will always seek. I love Thee, my Jesus; grant me the grace always to love Thee, and grant me this alone.

*Ejac.* My Jesus, when shall I really love Thee?

Spiritual Communion as above, page 86.

## Visit to Mary.

My most sweet Queen, how pleasing to me is that beautiful name by which thy devout clients address thee: "*Mater amabilis*, Most Amiable Mother!" Yes, my Lady, thou art truly and indeed amiable. Thy beauty has captivated thy Lord Himself: *And the king shall greatly desire thy beauty*—(Ps. xliv. 12). St. Bernard says that thy very name is so amiable to thy lovers that when they pronounce it, or hear it, they are inflamed with a fresh desire to love thee: "O sweet, O pious, O exceedingly amiable Mary! Thou canst not be named without inflaming, neither can thy name be heard without enkindling the affections of those who love thee." It is, then, reasonable, my most amiable

Mother, that I should love thee. But I am not satisfied with only loving thee; I desire in the first place on earth, and then in Heaven, to be, after God, thy greatest lover. If my desire is presumptuous, it is thou thyself who art to blame, on account of thy amiability and the special love which thou hast shown me. If thou wert less amiable, my desire to love thee would be less. Accept, then, O Lady, this my desire, and in token thou hast accepted it, do thou obtain for me from God this love for which I ask thee, since He is so well pleased with the love which is borne thee.

*Ejac.* My most amiable Mother, I love thee much!

CONCLUDING PRAYER as on page 87.

## Evening Meditation

### *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

#### XXX.—HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST SEEKS TO DETACH HIMSELF FROM EVERY CREATURE.

I.

To arrive at a perfect union with God, a total detachment from creatures is of absolute necessity. And to come to particulars, we must divest ourselves of all inordinate affection towards relations. Jesus Christ said: *If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple*—(Luke xiv. 26). And wherefore this hatred to relations? Because, generally, as regards the interests of the soul, we cannot have greater enemies than our own kindred: *And a man's enemies shall be those of his own household*—(Matt. x. 36). St. Charles Borromeo declared that he never went to pay a visit to his own

family without returning cooled in fervour. And when Father Antony Mendoza was asked why he refused to enter the house of his parents, he replied, "Because I know, by experience, that nowhere is the devotion of a Religious so dissipated as in the house of his parents."

When, moreover, the choice of a state of life is concerned, it is certain that we are not obliged to obey our parents, according to the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas. Should a young man be called to the Religious life, and find opposition from his parents, he is bound to obey God, and not his parents, who, as the same St. Thomas says, with a view to their own interests and private ends, stand in the way of our spiritual welfare. "Friends of flesh and blood are oftentimes opposed to our spiritual profit." And they are content, says St. Bernard, to have their children go to eternal perdition rather than that they should leave home.

II.

It is surprising, in this matter, to see some fathers and mothers, even though God-fearing, yet so blinded by mistaken fondness, that they use every effort and exhaust every means to hinder the vocation of a child who wishes to become a Religious. This conduct, however (except in very rare cases), cannot be excused from grievous sin. But someone may say: What, then, and if such a youth does not become a Religious can he not be saved? Are, then, all who remain in the world cast away? I answer: Those whom God does not call into Religion may be saved in the world by fulfilling the duties of their state; but those who are called from the world and do not obey God, may, indeed, possibly be saved; but they will be saved with difficulty, because they will be deprived of those helps which God had destined for them in Religion, and for want of which they will not accomplish their salvation. The theologian Habert writes that he who disobeys his vocation remains in the Church like a

member out of joint, and cannot discharge his duty without the greatest pain; and so will hardly effect his salvation. Whence he draws this conclusion : "Although, absolutely speaking, he can be saved, yet he will enter on the way, and employ the means of salvation, with difficulty."

The choice of a state of life is compared by Father Lewis of Granada to " the main-spring" of a watch : if the main-spring be broken, the whole watch is out of order; and the same holds good with regard to our salvation,—if the state of life be out of order, the whole life is out of order too. Alas, how many poor youths have lost their vocation through their parents, and have afterwards come to a bad end, and have themselves proved the ruin of their family !

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## Third Sunday after Pentecost

(**The Feast of the Mother of Perpetual Succour*).

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### Morning Meditation

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### *FEAST OF THE MOTHER OF PERPETUAL SUCCOUR.*

The Blessed Virgin Mary has earned the beautiful and glorious title of Perpetual Succour, not only by her valiant deeds, but also by her great sufferings. Truly

*The Feast of the Mother of Perpetual Succour is celebrated on the Sunday before the Feast of St. John the Baptist (June 24).

Mary was that valiant woman who put forth her hands to strong things, even to be the helper, the consoler, the Perpetual Succour of the Man-God Himself. To her the divine Child ever turned for sympathy, succour, and a sweet refuge, and never did He do so in vain. Surely she who was able to help and succour and comfort the Omnipotent God Himself when He became weak for our sakes, will be able to comfort and succour His poor creatures.

I.

Truly Mary, God's great Mother, performed valiant deeds. She was the valiant woman who put forth her hands to strong things to help even Him Who made the world, to assist Him Who sustains all creation, to succour and console Him Who was the joy of Heaven and earth, and to save Him Who was the world's Saviour—this was holy Mary's work, these were her valiant deeds to which she put forth her hands, and therefore it was she received from the Lord the fruit of her glorious deeds, and became for man what she had been for God Himself, a helper, a consoler, a Mother of Perpetual Succour.

The Sacred Picture itself speaks better than words. In that awful representation of suffering and sorrow the Mother's breast is the Child's perpetual succour, for there we see He clings, clasping her hand with His trembling fingers, and finding comfort and succour in her sheltering arms. She clasps Him to her bosom, kisses away the tears, hushes Him to sleep in her arms to drown if possible, by sweet lullabies, the horrid sounds and sights of His Passion that in vision haunt and scare Him. It was to her, and to her alone, He ever and always turned for succour and sweet refuge, and never did He turn in vain. Thus, we may well say, did God place in Mary's keeping Him in Whom were all human infirmities, that Child of Sorrows, so that she might learn from experience how to compassionate and succour poor humanity in us. And when she had proved her fitness,

her skill, her tenderness in succouring and comforting the suffering Head, she was left to the suffering members of His mystical Body, to be to us what she had ever been to Him, a most sweet Comforter, a Mother of Perpetual Succour.

II.

Consider what conditions are required in us that Mary may be our Mother of Perpetual Succour. We must be her children that she may be our Mother. An enemy or a stranger will not dare to claim, or hope to expect what is bestowed only on faithful, loving children —a mother's affection, tender care and succour. As Mary's true and faithful children we should love her very much, and above all we should sympathise with her, remembering the bitter sorrows she had to undergo in order to become our Perpetual Succour. The very rocks of Calvary were rent asunder, and melted to pity for Mother and Son. But it was our sins inflicted all those wounds and sorrows. *For the sins of my people have I struck him*—(Is. liii. 8). "Each one of our sins," says St. Alphonsus, "afflicted the soul of Jesus Christ more than Crucifixion and Death afflicted His body." What, then, asks the Saint, must have been the sufferings of Jesus, as yet in His Mother's arms, when He saw before Him the immense array of all the crimes of men for which He was to make satisfaction! As by our sins we had part in inflicting life-long sorrow on the Mother of the Saviour, we should offer her life-long sympathy and pity.

We should have a child's confidence in our heavenly Mother, such indeed as her Child Jesus Himself had. As represented in the holy Picture, what childlike trust does Jesus repose in His holy Mother! In all His wants, and in the midst of the sorrows that were continually before Him, the Child Jesus ever turned to His Mother for comfort and succour. With the arms of His Mother guarding Him, and resting on her bosom, the weak and helpless

Child becomes strong and valiant, and turning resolutely gazes on the awful vision of the instruments of His Crucifixion and Death, exclaiming with the Prophet : *I am prepared for scourges.*

All Mary's children should have the same unfailing, childlike trust in her power. However weak we may be of ourselves, we shall be made strong and resolute against the attacks of hell; patient, generous, and victorious in the midst of temptations and sufferings, provided only we fail not in our confidence in our Mother of Perpetual Succour. " She well understands our miseries and dangers," says St. Alphonsus, " and this most clement and sweet Lady, compassionates and succours us with a Mother's love."

Let us, then, have perpetual recourse to Mary to make sure of her Perpetual Succour. Constant recourse to Mary is a pledge of eternal salvation, but yet, alas ! too often in past times have we fallen because we had not recourse to her. Sinners though we are, let us turn to Mary in spite of our unworthiness. " O sinner," says St. Alphonsus, " whoever you are, do not despair, but have recourse to this Lady with the assurance of being succoured," for, he says, " she is all eyes to pity and succour us in our necessities."

Behold, then, I have recourse to thee, most holy Mary. I have lost my Father, but thou art my Mother who must enable me to find Him. In this my so great misfortune I call thee to my aid : do thou succour me. And this is the grace I now ask of thee, and I conjure thee as far as I know how and can to obtain it for me—namely, in the assaults of hell always to have recourse to thee and to say to thee : O Mary, help me ! Mother of Perpetual Succour, suffer me not to lose my God ! Amen.

## Spiritual Reading

### *CORAM SANCTISSIMO*

EIGHTEENTH VISIT.

One day Jesus will be seated on a throne of majesty in the Valley of Josaphat; but now, in the Most Blessed Sacrament, He is seated on a throne of love. Did a king, to show his love for a poor shepherd, go and live in his village, how great would be the ingratitude of this peasant did he not go often to visit him, knowing the king's wish to see him, and that for this purpose he had come to reside there!

Ah, my Jesus, for love of me Thou dwellest in the Sacrament of the Altar. Could I, then, do so, my desire would be to remain night and day in Thy presence. If the Angels, O my Lord, filled with astonishment at the love Thou bearest us, remain always around Thee, it is but reasonable that I, seeing Thee for my sake on this altar, shou'd endeavour to please Thee, at least by remaining in Thy presence to praise the love and goodness Thou hast for me: *I will sing praise to thee in the sight of the angels; I will worship towards thy holy temple, and I will give glory to thy name; for thy mercy and for thy truth*—(Ps. cxxxvii. 1, 2).

O God, present in this Most Holy Sacrament, O Bread of Angels, O heavenly Food, I love Thee, but Thou art not, neither am I, satisfied with my love. I love Thee; but I love Thee too little. Do Thou, my Jesus, make known to me the beauty, the immense goodness which I love; make my heart banish from itself all earthly affections, and give place to Thy divine love. To fill me with Thy love, and to unite Thyself all to me, Thou descendest every day from Heaven on our altars; it is, then, but just that I should think of nothing else but of loving, adoring, and pleasing Thee. I love Thee

with my whole soul, I love Thee with all my affections. If Thou be graciously pleased to make me a return for this love, increase my love, render its flames more ardent; that thus I may always love Thee more, and desire more and more to please Thee.

*Ejac.* Jesus, my Love, give me love!

Spiritual Communion as above, page 86.

## Visit to Mary.

As poor sick persons, who on account of their miseries are abandoned by all, find shelter in the public hospitals, so also the most miserable sinners, although discarded by all, find protection in the mercy of Mary, by whom they are never rejected; for God has placed her in the world as a receptacle and, as St. Basil says, a public hospital for sinners. Hence St. Ephrem also calls her "the asylum of sinners." Therefore, my Queen, if I have recourse to thee, thou canst not reject me on account of my sins; nay, even the more wretched I am, the greater is the claim which I have upon thy protection, since God has created thee as the refuge of the most miserable. Therefore, to thee I have recourse, O Mary; I place myself under thy mantle. Thou art the refuge of sinners; thou art, then, my refuge, the hope of my salvation. If thou reject me, to whom shall I have recourse?

*Ejac.* Mary, my refuge, save me!

Concluding Prayer as on page 87.

## Evening Meditation

### *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

#### XXXI.—HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST SEEKS TO DETACH HIMSELF FROM EVERY CREATURE.

I.

Anyone who would belong wholly to God must be free of all human respect. Oh, how many souls does this accursed respect keep far from God, and even separate them from Him for ever! For instance, if they hear mention made of some or other of their failings, oh, what do they not do to justify themselves, and to convince the world that it is a calumny! If they perform some good work, how industrious are they to circulate it everywhere! They would have it known to the whole world in order to be universally applauded. The Saints behave in a very different way; they would rather publish their defects to the whole world, in order to pass in the eyes of all for the miserable creatures which they really are in their own eyes; and, on the contrary, in practising any acts of virtue, they prefer to have God alone know of it; for their only care is to be acceptable to Him. It is on this account that so many of them were enchanted with solitude, mindful, as they were, of the words of Jesus Christ: *But when thou dost alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth*—(Matt. vi. 3-5). And again: *But thou, when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber; and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret*—(Matt. v. 6). But of all things, self-detachment is most needful; that is, detachment from self-will. Only once succeed in subduing yourself, and you will easily triumph in every other combat. "*Vince teipsum*—Conquer thyself," was the maxim which St. Francis Xavier inculcated on all. And Jesus Christ said: *If any one will come after me, let him deny himself*

—(Matt. xvi. 24). Behold in a few words all that we need practise to become saints; to deny ourselves, and not to follow our own will : *Go not after thy lusts, but turn away from thy own will*—(Ecclus. xviii. 30). And this is the greatest grace, said St. Francis of Assisi, that we can receive from God : the power, namely, to conquer ourselves by denying self-will.

II.

St. Bernard writes that if all men would resist self-will, none would ever be damned : " Let self-will cease, and there will be no hell." The same Saint writes that it is the baneful effect of self-will to contaminate even our good works : " Self-will is a great evil, since it renders thy good works no longer good." As, for instance, were a penitent obstinately bent on mortifying himself, or on fasting, or on taking the discipline against the will of his director; we see that this act of penance, done at the instigation of self-will, becomes very defective. Unhappy the man that lives the slave of self-will, for he shall have a yearning for many things and shall not possess them; while, on the other hand, he will be forced to undergo many things distasteful and bitter to his inclinations : *From whence are wars and contentions among you? Are they not hence, from your concupiscences which war in your members? You covet, and have not*—(James iv. 1, 2). The first war springs from the appetite for sensual delights. Let us take away the occasion; let us mortify the eyes; let us recommend ourselves to God, and the war will be over. The second war arises from the covetousness of riches : let us cultivate a love of poverty, and this war will cease. The third war has its source in ambitiously seeking after honours : let us love humility and the hidden life, and this war, too, will be no more. The fourth war, and the most ruinous of all, comes from self-will. Let us practise resignation in all that happens to us, and the war will cease. St. Bernard tells us that

whenever we see a person troubled, the origin of his trouble is nothing else than his inability to gratify self-will. "Whence comes disquiet," says the Saint, "except that we follow self-will?" Our Blessed Lord once complained of this to St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, in these words: "Certain souls desire My Spirit, but after their own fancy; and so they become incapable of receiving it."

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## Monday—Third Week after Pentecost

(*June 25th*).

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### Morning Meditation

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### "*HE WAS SUBJECT TO THEM.*"

God created Adam and enriched him with gifts, but ungrateful man offended Him by rebelling, and thus both he and all his posterity remained deprived of divine grace and Paradise. What did the Eternal Father do to save lost man? He sent His own Son to become Man, and to die for man, in order that by His death He might pay man's debts to divine justice and so restore him to divine grace. O God, what a subject of astonishment to the Angels, this great love of God to rebellious man!

I.

God created Adam and enriched him with gifts, but ungrateful man offended Him by rebelling, and thus he

and all his posterity were deprived of divine grace and Paradise. Thus, then, all mankind was lost and without a remedy. Man had offended God, and therefore was incapable of giving Him an adequate satisfaction; it was necessary, then, that Divine Person should satisfy for man. What did the Eternal Father do to save lost man? He sent His own Son to become Man, and clothe Himself with the same flesh as sinful men, in order that by His death He might pay man's debts to divine Justice, and thus obtain for man a restoration to divine grace.

O my God, if Thy infinite bounty had not discovered this remedy, who of us could ever have asked it or even imagined it?

O God, what a subject of wonder must not this great love which God showed to rebellious man have been to the Angels! What must they have said when they saw the Eternal Word become Man, and assume the same flesh as sinful man, insomuch that this Word Incarnate appeared to the whole world in the form of sinful man, as were all others. O my Jesus, how much do we not owe Thee, and how much more than others am I not indebted to Thee, who have offended Thee so much more than others! If Thou hadst not come to save me, what would have become of me for all eternity? Who could have saved me from the pains that I deserve? Mayest Thou be ever blessed and praised for so great love!

II.

But, O God, how few there are who show themselves grateful for so immense a love by faithfully loving their Redeemer! Alas! the greater part of men, after so incomparable a benefit, after so many great mercies and so much love, still say to God: Lord, we will not serve Thee; we choose rather to be the slaves of the devil and condemned to hell than be Thy servants. Listen to how God upbraids such thankless wretches: *Thou hast burst my bands, and thou saidst: I will not serve*—(Jer. ii. 20).

What say you? Have you too been one of these? And, tell me, whilst living far from God and the slave of the devil, have you felt really happy? Have you been at peace? Ah, no, the divine words can never fail: *Because thou didst not serve the Lord thy God with joy and gladness of heart, thou shalt serve thy enemy in hunger and thirst and nakedness, and in want of all things*—(Deut. xxviii. 47). Since thou hast preferred to serve thy enemy rather than serve thy God, behold how that tyrant has treated thee. He has made thee groan as a slave in chains, poor, afflicted, and deprived of every interior consolation. But come, rise up; God speaks to thee whilst thou mayest still be freed from the fetters of death which bind thee: *Loose the bonds from off thy neck, O captive daughters of Sion*—(Is. lii. 2). Make haste while time is left. Unbind thyself, poor soul, who hast become the voluntary slave of hell; strike off these cursed chains that hold thee fast as a prey for hell, and bind thyself instead with My chains of gold, chains of love, chains of peace, chains of salvation: *Her bands are a healthful binding*—(Ecclus. vi. 31). But in what manner are souls bound to God? By love: *Have charity, which is the bond of perfection*—(Col. iii. 14). A soul that always walks by the single way of the fear of punishment, and from this single motive avoids sin, is always in danger of making a relapse before long into sin; but he that attaches himself to God by love is sure not to lose God as long as he loves Him.

O my Jesus, Thou hast been pleased to become a Servant for love of me, and in order to release me from the chains of hell; and not only the Servant of Thy Father, but of men and of executioners, even to the laying down of Thy life: and I, for the love of some wretched and poisonous pleasure, have so often forsaken Thy service, and have become the slave of the devil. A thousand times over I curse those moments in which, by a wicked abuse of my free-will, I despised Thy grace, O infinite Majesty! In pity pardon me, and bind me to Thyself with those delightful chains of love with which

Thou keepest Thy chosen souls in closest union with Thee. I love Thee, O Incarnate Word; I love Thee, O my sovereign Good!

## Spiritual Reading

### *CORAM SANCTISSIMO.*

NINETEENTH VISIT.

It is sweet to everyone to be in the company of a dear friend; and shall we not find it sweet in this valley of tears to remain in the company of the best Friend we have, and Who can do us every kind of good: Who loves us with the most tender affection, and therefore dwells always with us? Behold, in the Most Blessed Sacrament we can converse at pleasure with Jesus, we can open our hearts to Him, we can lay our wants before Him, and we can ask Him for His graces; in a word, in this Sacrament we can treat with the King of Heaven in all confidence and without restraint. Joseph was only too happy when, as the Sacred Scripture tells us, God descended by His grace into His prison to comfort Him: *She went down with him into the pit, and in bands she left him not*—(Wisd. x. 13). But we are yet more highly favoured; for we have always with us in this land of miseries our God made Man, Who by His real presence, is with us all the days of our life, and comforts and helps us with the greatest affection and compassion. What a consolation it is to a poor prisoner to have an affectionate friend, who keeps him company, consoles him, gives him hope, succours him, and thinks of relieving him in his misery! Behold our Good Friend, Jesus Christ, Who in this Sacrament encourages us, saying: *Behold, I am with you all days*—(Matt. xxviii. 20). Behold Me, He says, I am all thine: I am come from Heaven into thy prison expressly to console thee, to help

thee, to deliver thee. Welcome Me, and do so always; cling to Me, and thus thou wilt never feel thy miseries; and afterwards thou wilt come with Me to My Kingdom, where I shall make thee perfectly happy.

O God, O incomprehensible ocean of love, since Thy condescension towards us is so great, that in order to dwell near us Thou descendest upon our altars, I resolve often to visit Thee; I am determined, as often as I possibly can, to enjoy Thy most sweet presence, which is the beatitude of the Saints in Heaven. Oh, could I but always remain in Thy presence, to adore Thee and to make Thee acts of love! Arouse, I beseech Thee, my soul, when through tepidity or worldly affairs it neglects to visit Thee. Enkindle in me a great desire always to remain near Thee in this Sacrament. Ah, my loving Jesus, would that I had always loved Thee! Would that I had always pleased Thee! I console myself that I still have time to do so, not only in the next life, but also in this. I am determined to do so; I am determined to love Thee indeed, my sovereign Good, my Love, my Treasure, my All. I will love Thee with all my strength.

*Ejac.* My God, help me to love Thee!

Spiritual Communion as above, page 86.

## Visit to Mary.

The devout Bernardine de Bustis says: "O sinner, whoever you may be, despair not; but with confidence have recourse to this Lady; you will find her hands filled with mercies and graces." And know also, that this most compassionate Queen has a greater desire to do you good than you can have to be succoured by her. I will ever, O my Lady, thank God for having taught me to know thee. Unfortunate indeed should I be did I not know thee, or did I forget thee; ill would it fare with my salvation. But, my Mother, I bless thee, I love thee;

and so great is my confidence in thee, that I place my whole soul in thy hands.

*Ejac.* O Mary, blessed is he who knows thee, and puts his trust in thee!

CONCLUDING PRAYER as on page 87.

## Evening Meditation

### *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

#### XXXII.—HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST SEEKS TO DETACH HIMSELF FROM EVERY CREATURE.

I.

We must love God in the way that pleases God, and not that pleases ourselves. God will have us divested of all, in order to be united to Himself, and to be replenished with His Divine love. St. Teresa writes as follows: "The prayer of union appears to me to be nothing more than to die utterly, as it were, to all things in this world, for the enjoyment of God alone. One thing is certain, that the more completely we empty ourselves of creatures by detaching ourselves from them for the love of God, the more abundantly will He fill us with Himself, and the more closely shall we be united with Him." Many spiritual persons would attain to union with God; but then they accept not the contradictions which God sends them: they fret at having to suffer from ill-health, from poverty, from affronts; but, for want of resignation, they will never come to a perfect union with God. Let us hear what St. Catherine of Genoa says: "To arrive at union with God, the contrarieties which God sends us are absolutely necessary: His purpose is to consume in us, by means of them, all irregular movements, both within and without. And hence all contempt, ailments, poverty,

temptations, and other trials, are all indispensable, to give us the opportunity of fighting; that so, by the way of victory, we may eventually extinguish all inordinate movements, so as to be no longer sensible of them; furthermore, until we begin to find contradictions sweet for God's sake, instead of bitter, we shall never arrive at divine union."

O Jesus, my Love, my Hope, my Courage, and my Consolation, give me strength to be faithful to Thee! Grant me light, and make known to me from what I ought to detach myself; supply me too with a strong will to obey Thee in all things. O Love of my soul, I offer myself, and deliver myself up entirely, to satisfy the desire Thou hast to unite Thyself with me, that I may be wholly united with Thee, my God and my All. Come, then, my Jesus; come and take possession of my whole self, and occupy all my thoughts and all my affections. I renounce all my desires, all my comforts, and all created things; Thou alone art sufficient for me. Grant me the grace to think only of Thee, to desire only Thee, to seek only Thee, my Beloved and my only Good! O Mary, Mother of God, obtain for me holy perseverance!

II.

I will here subjoin the teaching of St. John of the Cross. The Saint says that to acquire a perfect union, "a thorough mortification of the senses and of the appetites is necessary. On the part of the senses, every single liking that presents itself to them, if it be not purely for the glory of God, should forthwith be rejected for the love of Jesus Christ; for example, should you have a desire to see or hear something in no wise conducive to the greater glory of God, then refrain from it. As to the appetites also, we should endeavour to force ourselves always to choose the worst, the most disagreeable or the poorest without fostering any other wish than to suffer and to be despised." In a word, he that truly loves Jesus Christ loses all affection for things of earth, and seeks to strip

himself of all, in order to keep himself united with Jesus Christ alone. Jesus is the object of all his desires, Jesus the subject of all his thoughts; for Jesus he continually sighs; in every place, at every time, on every occasion, his sole aim is to give pleasure to Jesus. But to reach this point we must strive unceasingly to rid the heart of every affection which is not for God. And, I ask, what is meant by giving the soul entirely to God? It means, firstly, to shun whatever may be displeasing to God, and to do what is most pleasing to Him; secondly, it means to accept unreservedly all that comes from His hands, how hard or disagreeable soever it may be; it means, thirdly, to give the preference in all things to the will of God over our own: this is what is meant by belonging wholly to God.

Ah, my God and my All! I cannot help feeling that, in spite of all my ingratitude and remissness in Thy service, Thou still invitest me to love Thee. Behold me, then, I will resist Thee no longer. I will leave all to be wholly Thine. I will no more live for myself: Thy claims on my love are too strong. My soul is enamoured of Thee; my Jesus, it sighs after Thee. And how can I possibly love anything else, after seeing Thee die of suffering on a Cross in order to save me! How can I behold Thee dead, all worn out with torments, and not love Thee with my whole heart? Yes, I love Thee indeed with all my soul; and I have no other desire but to love Thee in this life and for all eternity.

# Tuesday—Third Week after Pentecost

## Morning Meditation

### I.—*HOW TO CONVERSE CONTINUALLY AND FAMILIARLY WITH GOD.*

Holy Job was struck with wonder when he considered how our God was so devoted to benefiting man, and showing the chief concern of His Heart to be to love man and to make Himself beloved by man. *What is man that thou shouldst magnify him? Or why dost thou set thy heart upon him?*—(Job vii. 17). Surely, then, it would be a great mistake to think that great confidence and familiarity in treating with God is a want of reverence for His Infinite Majesty.

#### 1.

Holy Job was struck with wonder when he considered our God so devoted to benefiting man, and showing the chief concern of His Heart to be to love man and to make Himself beloved by man. Speaking to the Lord, Job exclaims, *What is man, that thou shouldst magnify him, or why dost thou set thy heart upon him?*—(Job vii. 17). Surely, then, it would be a great mistake to think that great confidence and familiarity in treating with God is a want of reverence for His Infinite Majesty. You ought indeed, O devout soul, to revere Him in all humility, and abase yourself before Him; especially when you call to mind the unthankfulness and the out-

rages whereof, in past times, you have been guilty. Yet this should not hinder your treating with Him with the most tender love and all the confidence in your power. He is Infinite Majesty; but at the same time He is Infinite Goodness, Infinite Love. In God you possess the Lord most exalted and supreme; but you have also Him Who loves you with the greatest possible love. He disdains not, but delights that you should use towards Him that confidence, that freedom and tenderness, which children use towards their mothers. Hear how He invites us to come to His feet, and the caresses He promises to bestow on us: *You shall be carried at the breasts, and upon the knees they shall caress you: as one whom the mother caresseth, so will I comfort you* —(Is. lxvi. 12). As a mother delights to place her little child upon her knees, and so to feed or to caress him; with like tenderness does our gracious God delight to treat souls whom He loves, who have given themselves wholly to Him, and placed all their hopes in His goodness.

II.

Consider you have no friend or brother, or father or mother, or spouse or lover, who loves you more than your God. Divine grace is that great treasure whereby we vilest of creatures, we servants, become the dear friends of our Creator Himself: *For she is an infinite treasure to men, which they that use become the friends of God* –(Wis. vii. 14). For this purpose He increases our confidence; *He emptied himself*—(Phil. ii. 7), and brought Himself to nought, so to speak; abasing Himself even to becoming Man and conversing familiarly with us: *He conversed with men*—(Bar. iii. 38). He went so far as to become an Infant; to become poor; even so far as openly to die the death of a malefactor upon the Cross. He went yet farther, even to hide Himself under the appearance of bread, in order to become our constant Companion and unite Himself inti-

mately to us : *He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him*—(Jo. vi. 57). In a word, He loves you as much as though He had no love but towards yourself alone. For which reason you ought to have no love for any but God alone. Of Him, therefore, you may say, and you ought to say . *My beloved to me, and I to him*—(Cant. ii. 16). My God has given Himself all to me, and I give myself all to Him; He has chosen me for His beloved, and I choose Him, of all others, for my only Love : *My beloved is white and ruddy, chosen out of thousands*—(Cant. v. 10).

Say, then, to Him often : " Oh, my Lord, wherefore dost Thou love me thus? What good thing dost Thou see in me? Hast Thou forgotten the injuries I have done Thee? But since Thou hast treated me so lovingly and, instead of casting me into hell, hast granted me so many favours, whom can I desire to love from this day forward but Thee, my God and my All? Ah, most gracious God, if in time past I have offended Thee, it is not so much the punishment I have deserved that now grieves me, as the displeasure I have given Thee, Who art worthy of infinite love. But Thou knowest not how to despise a heart that repents and humbles itself : *A contrite and humble heart, O God, thou wilt not despise* —(Ps. l. 19). Ah, now, indeed, neither in this life nor in the other do I desire aught but Thee alone : *What have I in heaven, and besides thee what do I desire upon earth? Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever*—(Ps. lxxii. 25). Thou alone art and shalt be forever the only Lord of my heart, of my will. Thou art my only Good, my Heaven, my Hope, my Love, my All : *The God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever!*

## Spiritual Reading

### *CORAM SANCTISSIMO.*

TWENTIETH VISIT.

The Prophet Zacharias says : *In that day there shall be a fountain open to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for the washing of the sinner* —(Zach. xiii. 1). Jesus in the Holy Sacrament is the Fountain foretold by the Prophet as open to all, and to which we can go whenever we please, to wash our souls from all the stains of sin which are daily contracted. When anyone falls into some fault, what more beautiful remedy than to have immediate recourse to the Most Blessed Sacrament !

Yes, my Jesus, I resolve always to do this : for I know that the waters of this Fountain of Thine not only cleanse me, but also give me light, and strenghen me not to fall, and enable me cheerfully to bear contradictions, and also inflame me with Thy love. I know that for this end it is that Thou awaitest visits, and recompensest those of Thy lovers with so many graces. My Jesus, delay not, but wash me now from all the defects I have committed this day, and for which I am grieved because they have displeased Thee; strengthen me against relapse by giving me a great desire to love Thee much. Oh, could I but always dwell near Thee, as did Thy faithful servant Mary Diaz. She lived in the time of St. Teresa, and had permission from the Bishop of Avila to inhabit the tribune of a church, where she remained almost always in the presence of the Most Blessed Sacrament, which she called her Neighbour, and which she only left to go to Confession and Communion. When the Venerable Brother Francis of the Infant Jesus, of the Order of the Discalced Carmelites, passed before a church in which the Blessed Sacrament was kept, he could

not refrain from entering to pay a visit to our Lord, saying that: "it was not becoming for a friend to pass before the door of a friend without entering at least to salute him and exchange a word." But a word did not satisfy him; he always remained as long as obedience allowed him in the presence of his beloved Lord.

My only and infinite Good, I see that Thou hast instituted this Sacrament, and that Thou remainest on this altar to be loved by me; and that for this end Thou hast given me a heart capable of loving Thee much. Why is it, then, that I am so ungrateful as not to love Thee, or that I love Thee so little? Now it is not just that such goodness as Thou art should be so little loved. The love, at least, which Thou bearest me deserves other and greater love on my part. Thou art an infinite God and I am a miserable worm. It would be little did I die for Thee, or wear myself out for Thee, Who didst die for me, and dost still sacrifice Thyself for me every day on the altar. Thou deservest to be much loved; I will love Thee much; help me, my Jesus, help me to love Thee, help me to do that which pleases Thee so much, and which Thou so earnestly seekest of me.

*Ejac. My Beloved to me, and I to my Beloved!* —(Cant. ii. 16).

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION as above, page 86.

## VISIT TO MARY.

O my most sweet, most compassionate most amiable Queen, how great is the confidence with which St. Bernard inspires me when I have recourse to thee! He says that thou dost not examine the merits of those who have recourse to thy compassion, but that thou offerest thyself to help all who pray to thee: "Mary does not discuss merits, but shows herself ready to hear and welcome all." Therefore I pray to thee thou dost graciously hear me. Well, then, listen to what I have to ask: I am a poor

sinner, deserving of a thousand hells. I wish to change my life; I wish to love my God, Whom I have so greatly offended. I dedicate myself to thee as thy slave; to thee I give myself, miserable as I am; save, then, a poor creature who is no longer his own but thine. My Lady, dost thou understand me? Yes, I trust that thou hast understood me, and graciously heard my prayer.

*Ejac.* O Mary, I am thine, save me!

Concluding Prayer as on page 87.

## Evening Meditation

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### *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

*"Charity is not provoked to anger."*

#### XXXIII.—HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST IS NEVER ANGRY WITH HIS NEIGHBOUR.

I.

The virtue not to be angry at the contrarieties that happen to us is the daughter of meekness. We have already spoken at length on the acts that belong to meekness; but since this is a virtue that requires to be constantly practised by every one living among his fellow men, we will here make some remarks on the same subject more in particular, and more adapted for practice.

Humility and meekness were the favourite virtues of Jesus Christ; so that He bade His disciples learn of Him to be meek and humble: *Learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart*—(Matt. xi. 29). Our Redeemer was called the Lamb—*Behold the Lamb of God*—as well in consideration of His having to be offered in sacrifice on the Cross for our sins, as in consideration of the meekness exhibited by Him during His entire life, but more

especially at the time of His Passion. When in the house of Caiphas He received a blow from that servant, who at the same time upbraided Him with presumption in those words : *Answerest thou the high-priest so?* Jesus only answered : *If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil; but if well, why strikest thou me?*—(Jo. xviii. 23). He observed the same invariable meekness of conduct till death. While on the Cross, and made the object of universal scorn and blasphemy, He only besought the Eternal Father to forgive His enemies : *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do*—(Luke xxiii. 34).

II.

Oh, how dear to Jesus Christ are those meek souls who, in suffering affronts, derision, calumnies, persecution, and even chastisement and blows, are not irritated against the person that thus injures or strikes them : *The prayer of the meek hath always pleased thee* (Judith ix. 16). God is always pleased with the prayers of the meek; that is to say, their prayers are always heard. Heaven is expressly promised to the meek : *Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land* —(Matt. v. 4). Father Alvarez said that Paradise is the country of those who are despised and persecuted and trodden under foot here. Yes, for it is for them that the possession of the eternal Kingdom is reserved, and not for the haughty who are honoured and esteemed by the world. David declares that the meek shall not only inherit eternal happiness, but shall likewise enjoy great peace in the present life : *The meek shall inherit the land, and shall delight in abundance of peace*—(Ps. xxxvi. 11). It is so, because the Saints harbour no malice against those who ill-treat them, but rather love them the more; and the Lord, in reward for their patience, gives them an increase of interior peace. St. Teresa said : " I seem to experience a renewed love towards those persons who speak ill of me." This gave occasion to the Sacred Congregation to say of the Saint, that " even affronts

themselves supplied her with the food of charity." Offences became a fresh reason for her to love the person who had offended her. No one can have such meekness as this, if he has not a great humility and a low opinion of himself, so as to consider himself worthy of every kind of contempt; and hence we see, on the contrary, that the proud are always irritable and vindictive, because they have a high conceit of themselves, and esteem themselves worthy of all honour.

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## Wednesday—Third Week after Pentecost

### Morning Meditation

### *II.—HOW TO CONVERSE CONTINUALLY AND FAMILIARLY WITH GOD.*

If you desire to please the loving Heart of Jesus, converse with Him from this day forward with the greatest possible confidence and tenderness. Beloved soul, says God, *I have written thee in my hands: thy walls are always before me*—(Is. xlix. 16). What do you fear? I have written you in My hands so as never to forget to do you service.

1.

In order the more to strengthen your confidence in God, often call to mind His loving treatment of you, and the gracious means He has used to draw you from

the disorders of your life and your attachments to earth, in order to attract you to His holy love; and therefore fear lest you have too little confidence in treating with your God, now that you have a resolute will to love and please Him with all your power. The mercies He has granted you are most sure pledges of the love He bears you. God is displeased with a want of trust on the part of souls that heartily love Him, and whom He loves. If, then, you desire to please His loving Heart, converse with Him from this day forward with the greatest possible confidence and tenderness.

*I have graven thee in my hands: thy walls are always before my eyes*—(Is. xlix. 16). Beloved soul, says the Lord, why do you fear or mistrust? I have you written in My hands, so as never to forget to do you service. Are you afraid of your enemies? Know that the care of your defence is always before Me, so that I cannot lose sight of it. David rejoiced, saying to God: *Thou hast crowned us as with a shield of thy good will*—(Ps. v. 13). Who, O Lord, can ever harm us, if Thou with Thy goodness and love dost defend and encompass us round about? Above all, animate your confidence at the thought of the gift that God has given us—the Gift of Jesus Christ: *God so loved the world as to give his only-begotten Son*—(Jo. iii. 16). How can we ever fear, exclaims the Apostle, that God will refuse us any good, after He has vouchsafed to give us His own Son? *He delivered him up for us all; how hath he not also, with him, given us all things?*—(Rom. viii. 32).

*My delights are to be with the children of men*—(Prov. viii. 31). The paradise of God, so to speak, is the heart of man. Does God love you? Love Him. His delights are to be with you; let you delight to be with Him; to pass all your lifetime with Him, in the delight of whose company you hope to spend a blissful eternity. Accustom yourself to speak with Him alone, familiarly, with confidence and love, as to the dearest Friend you have, and Who loves you best.

II.

If it be a great mistake, as has been already said, to deal mistrustfully with God,—to be always coming before Him, as a slave, full of fear and confusion, comes before his prince, trembling with dread,—it would be a greater error to think that conversing with God is but weariness and bitterness. No, it is not so : *Her conversation hath no bitterness, nor her company any tediousness*—(Wis. viii. 16). Ask those souls who love God with a true love, and they will tell you that in the sorrows of their life they find no greater, no truer relief, than in loving converse with Him.

Now this does not require that you should continually apply your mind to it, so as to forget all your various employments and recreations. It only requires of you, without putting these aside, to act towards God as you yourself act towards those who love you and whom you love.

Your God is ever near you, nay, within you : *In him we live, and move, and have our being*—(Acts xvii. 28). There is no barrier at the door against any who desire to speak with Him; nay, God delights that you should treat with Him confidently. Treat with Him of your business, your plans, your griefs, your fears,—of all that concerns you. Above all, do so with confidence, with an open heart. For God is not wont to speak to the soul that speaks not to Him; forasmuch as, if it be not used to converse with Him, it would little understand His voice were He to speak to it. And this is what the Lord complains of : *Our sister is little: what shall we do to our sister in the day when she is to be spoken to?* —(Cant. viii. 8). Our sister is but a child in my love; what shall we do to speak to her if she understand me not? God will have Himself regarded as the Lord of surpassing power and terribleness, when we despise His grace; but, on the contrary, He will have Himself treated with as the most affectionate friend when we love

Him; and to this end He would have us often speak with Him familiarly and without restraint.

It is true that God ought always to be revered in the highest degree; but when He favours you by making you feel His presence, and know His desire that you should speak to Him as to one who more than all loves all, then express to Him your feelings with freedom and confidence. *She preventeth them that covet her, so that she first showeth herself unto them*—(Wis. vi. 14). When you desire God's love, He takes the first step, without waiting till you come to Him; and presents Himself to you, bringing with Him the graces and the remedies you stand in need of. He only waits for you to speak to Him, to show you that He is near to you, ready to hear and to comfort you: *And his ears are unto their prayers*—(Ps. xxxiii. 16).

## Spiritual Reading

### *CORAM SANCTISSIMO.*

#### TWENTY-FIRST VISIT.

*Wheresoever the body shall be, thither will the eagles also be gathered together*—(Matt. xxiv. 28). The Saints generally understand by this body that of Jesus Christ; and by the eagles, souls who, being detached from creatures, rise above the things of the earth and fly towards heaven, after which they always sigh in thought and affection, and where they constantly dwell. These eagles also find their Paradise on earth wherever they find Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament; so much so, indeed, that they seem never to tire hovering around Him. If eagles, says St. Jerome, on scenting a dead body go afar to seek it, how much more should we run and fly to Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament, as to the most delicious food

of our hearts! Hence the Saints in this valley of tears have always, as parched harts, run to this Fountain of Paradise. Father Balthazar Alvarez, of the Society of Jesus, in whatever occupation he was engaged, used often to cast his eyes towards the place where he knew our Lord was present in the Blessed Sacrament; he ofter visited Him, and even spent entire nights in His presence. He used to weep when he saw the palaces of the great ones of this world filled with people, who paid court to a man from whom they hoped for some miserable earthly good, and the churches so abandoned in which the supreme Sovereign of the world dwells, and remains with us on a throne of love, rich in immense and eternal treasures. He used also to say that Religious were indeed fortunate, because in the very houses in which they reside they can, whenever they please, either night or day, visit this great Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament, and this lay people cannot do.

Since, then, my most loving Lord, notwithstanding that Thou seest me as a leper, and so ungrateful to Thy love, Thou invitest me to approach Thee, I will not be discouraged at the sight of my miseries: I come and approach Thee; but do Thou wholly change me. Drive from me every love which is not for Thee, every desire which displeases Thee, every thought which does not tend towards Thee. My Jesus, my Love, my Treasure, my All, I am determined to please Thee alone. I will give pleasure only to Thee. Thou alone deservest all my love; Thee only will I love with my whole heart. Detach me from everything, my Lord, and bind me to Thyself alone; but bind me so firmly that I may never more be able to separate myself from Thee, either in this life or in the next.

*Ejac.* My most sweet Jesus, never allow me to be separated from Thee!

Spiritual Communion as above, page 86.

### Visit to Mary.

Denis the Carthusian called the Most Blessed Virgin "the advocate of all the wicked who have recourse to her." Since, then, O great Mother of God, thy office is to defend the cause of the most guilty criminals who have recourse to thee, behold me now at thy feet; to thee I have recourse, and I address thee in the words of St. Thomas of Villanova: "Now, therefore, O gracious advocate, fulfil thy charge." Now quickly enter upon thy office, undertake my cause. It is true that I have indeed been guilty before my Lord, having offended Him, after the many benefits and graces He has conferred upon me; but the evil is done. Thou canst save me. Thou hast only to tell thy God that thou defendest me, and then I shall be forgiven and shall be saved.

*Ejac.* My dear Mother, thou hast to save me.

Concluding Prayer as on page 87.

## Evening Meditation

### *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

#### XXXIV.—HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST IS NEVER ANGRY WITH HIS NEIGHBOUR.

I.

*Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord*—(Apoc. xiv. 13). We must, indeed, die in the Lord to be blessed, and to enjoy that blessedness here in the present life: we mean, such blessedness as can be had before entering Heaven, which, though certainly much below that of Heaven, yet far surpasses all the pleasures of sense in this world: *And the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts*—(Phil. iv. 7); so wrote

the Apostle to his disciples. But to gain this peace, even in the midst of affronts and calumnies, we must be *dead in the Lord* : a dead person, how much soever he may be ill-treated and trampled on by others, resents it not. In like manner, he who is meek, like a dead body, which no longer sees or feels, should endure all the outrages committed against him. Whoever loves Jesus Christ from his heart easily attains to this; because, as he is conformed in all things to God's will, he accepts with equal composure and peace of mind prosperous and adverse occurrences, consolations and afflictions, injuries and courtesies. Such was the conduct of the Apostle; and he says, therefore : *I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation*—(2 Cor. vii. 4). Oh, happy the man who reaches this point of virtue! He enjoys a continual peace, which is a treasure precious beyond all other goods of this world. St. Francis of Sales said : " Of what value is the whole universe in comparison with peace of heart?" And in truth, of what avail are all riches and all the honours of the world to a man that lives in disquiet, and whose heart is not at peace?

II.

In short, in order to remain constantly united with Jesus Christ, we must do all with tranquillity and not be troubled at any contradiction that we may encounter. *The Lord is not in the earthquake*—(3 Kings xix. 11). The Lord does not abide in troubled hearts. Let us listen to the beautiful lessons given on this subject by that master of meekness St. Francis of Sales : " Never put yourself in a passion, nor open the door to anger on any pretext whatever; because, when once it has gained an entrance, it is no longer in our power to banish it, or moderate it, when we wish to do so. The remedies against it are : (1) To check it immediately, by diverting the mind to some other object, and not to speak a word; (2) To imitate the Apostles when they beheld the tempest at sea, and to have recourse to God, to Whom it belongs

to restore peace to the soul; (3) If you feel that, owing to your weakness, anger has already got footing in your breast, in that case do yourself violence to regain your composure, and then try to make acts of humility and of sweetness towards the person against whom you are irritated; but all this must be done with sweetness and without violence, for it is of the utmost importance not to irritate the wounds." The Saint said that he himself was obliged to labour much during his life to overcome two passions which predominated in him, namely, anger and love; to subdue the passion of anger, he avowed it had cost him twenty-two years' hard struggle. As to the passion of love, he had succeeded in changing its object by leaving creatures and turning all his affections to God. And in this manner the Saint acquired so great an interior peace that it was visible even in his exterior; for he was invariably seen with a serene countenance and a smile on his features.

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## Thursday—Third Week after Pentecost

(*Feast of the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus*).

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### Morning Meditation

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### *THE LOVING HEART OF JESUS.*

Oh, if we could but understand the love that burns in the Heart of Jesus for us! Jesus has loved us more than His honour, more than His repose, more than His

life. Yea, love has induced Him even to become the very Food of our souls so as to unite and make His Heart and ours but one.

I.

Oh, if we could but understand the love that burns in the Heart of Jesus for us! He has loved us so much, that if all men, all the Angels, and all the Saints were to unite all their energies, they could never arrive at the thousandth part of the love that Jesus bears us. He loves us infinitely more than we love ourselves.

He has loved us even to excess: *They spoke of his decease* (excess) *which he was to accomplish in Jerusalem* —(Luke ix. 31). And what greater excess of love could there be than for God to die for His creatures? He has loved us to the greatest degree: *Having loved his own . . . he loved them unto the end*—(Jo. xiii. 1), since, after having loved us from eternity,—for there never was a moment from eternity when God did not think of us and did not love each one of us: *I have loved thee with an everlasting love*—(Jer. xxxi. 3)—for the love of us He made Himself Man, and chose a life of sufferings and the death of the Cross for our sake. Therefore He has loved us more than His honour, more than His repose, and more than His life; for He has sacrificed everything to show us the love He bears us. And is not this an excess of love sufficient to stupefy with astonishment the Angels of Paradise for all eternity?

This love induced Him also to remain with us in the Holy Sacrament as on a throne of love; for He remains there under the appearance of a small piece of bread, shut up in the tabernacle, where He seems to remain in a perfect annihilation of His majesty, without movement and without the use of His senses; so that it seems that He performs no other office there than that of loving men. Love makes us desire the constant presence of the object of our love. It is this love and this desire that

makes Jesus Christ reside with us in the Most Holy Sacrament.

O adorable Heart of my Jesus, Heart inflamed with love of men, Heart created on purpose to love them, how is it possible that Thou canst be despised, and Thy love so ill-requited by most men? Oh, miserable that I am, I also have been one of those ungrateful ones who have not loved Thee. Forgive me, my Jesus, this great sin of not having loved Thee, Who art so amiable, and Who hast loved me so much that Thou canst do nothing more to oblige me to love Thee. I feel that I deserve to be condemned not to be able to love Thee, for having renounced Thy love, as I have hitherto done. But no, my dearest Saviour, give me any chastisement, but do not inflict this one upon me. Grant me the grace to love Thee, and then give me any infliction Thou pleasest. But how can I fear such chastisement, whilst I feel that Thou continuest to give me the sweet, the pleasing precept of loving Thee, my Lord and my God?

II.

It seemed too short a time to this loving Saviour to spend only thirty-three years with men on earth; therefore, in order to show His desire of being constantly with us, He thought right to perform the greatest of all miracles, in the institution of the Holy Eucharist. But the work of Redemption was already completed, men had already become reconciled to God; for what purpose, then, did Jesus remain on earth in this Sacrament? Ah, He remains there because He could not bear to separate Himself from us, for, as He Himself said, He takes a delight in us.

Again, this love has induced Him even to become the Food of our souls, so to unite Himself to us, and to make His Heart and ours as one: *He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, abideth in me and I in him*—(Jo. vi. 57). O wonder! O excess of divine love!

It was said by a servant of God: If anything could

shake my faith in the Eucharist, it would not be the doubt as to how the bread could become flesh, or how Jesus could be in several places at once and confined in so small a space, because I would answer that God can do all things; but if I were asked how He could love men so much as to make Himself their Food, I have nothing else to answer but that this is a Mystery of Faith above my comprehension, and that the love of Jesus cannot be understood. O love of Jesus, do Thou make Thyself known to men and do Thou make Thyself loved!

*Love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart*—(Matt. xxii. 37). Yes, O my God, Thou wouldst be loved by me, and I will love Thee; indeed I will love none but Thee, Who hast loved me so much. O Love of my Jesus, Thou art my Love. O burning Heart of my Jesus, do Thou inflame my heart also. Do not permit me in future, even for a single moment, to live without Thy love; rather kill me, destroy me; do not let the world behold the spectacle of such horrid ingratitude as that I, who have been so beloved by Thee, and received so many favours and lights from Thee, should begin again to despise Thy love. No, my Jesus, do not permit this. I trust in the Blood Thou hast shed for me that I shall always love Thee, and that Thou wilt always love me, and that this love between Thee and me will not cease for all eternity.

O Mary, Mother of fair love, thou who desirest so much to see Jesus loved, bind me, unite me to thy Son; but bind me to Him, so that we may never again be separated.

## Spiritual Reading

### *CORAM SANCTISSIMO.*

TWENTY-SECOND VISIT.

The Spouse in the Sacred Canticles went about seeking for her Beloved; and, not finding Him, she asked all whom she met: *Have you seen him whom my soul loveth?*—(Cant. iii. 3). Jesus was not then on earth; but now, if a soul that loves Him seeks Him, she can always find Him in the Most Blessed Sacrament. Blessed John of Avila was accustomed to say that amongst all sanctuaries he could neither find nor desire a more delightful one than a church in which the Most Blessed Sacrament was reserved.

O infinite love of my God, worthy of infinite love! And how couldst Thou, my Jesus, in order to dwell amongst men, and to unite Thyself to their hearts, humble Thyself so as to conceal Thyself under the species of bread? O incarnate Word, Thou art supreme in Thy humility because Thou art supreme in Thy love! How can I do otherwise than love Thee with my entire self, knowing as I do how much Thou hast done to captivate my love? I love Thee much; and therefore I give Thy good pleasure the preference above every interest and every satisfaction of my own. My pleasure is to give Thee pleasure, my Jesus, my God, my Love, my All. Make me hunger to be continually in Thy presence in the Blessed Sacrament, to receive Thee into my heart, and to keep Thee company. I should be indeed ungrateful did I not accept so sweet and gracious an invitation. Ah, Lord, annihilate in me all affection for created things! Thou willest that Thou alone, my Creator, shouldst be the object of all my sighs, of all my love. I love Thee, most amiable goodness of my God. I ask nothing of Thee but Thyself. I desire not my own pleasure; Thy

pleasure is all my desire, and sufficient for me. Accept, my Jesus, this good desire of a sinner who wishes to love Thee. Help me by Thy grace. Grant that I, a miserable slave of hell, may from this day forward be the happy slave of Thy love!

*Ejac.* I love Thee, Jesus, my Treasure, above every other treasure!

Spiritual Communion as above, page 86.

### Visit to Mary.

My most sweet Lady and Mother, I am a rebel to thy great Son; but I come repentant to thy mercy, that thou mayst obtain me pardon. Say not that thou canst not do so, for St. Bernard calls thee "the minister of propitiation." To thee also it belongs to succour those who are in danger, St. Ephrem calling thee "the helper of those in peril." My Lady, who is in greater danger than I am? I have lost God; it is certain that I have been condemned to hell. I know not whether God has yet pardoned me. I may again lose Him. But thou canst obtain me all; and from thee I hope for every good, for forgiveness, perseverance, and Heaven. I hope to be one of those who, in the kingdom of the blessed, will most praise thy mercies, O Mary, for having saved me by thy intercession.

*Ejac.* I will sing the mercies of Mary for all eternity. I will sing them for ever and ever! Amen, amen.

Concluding Prayer as on page 87.

## Evening Meditation

### *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

XXXV.—HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST IS NEVER ANGRY WITH HIS NEIGHBOUR.

I.

*From whence are wars? . . . Are they not from your concupiscences?*—(James iv. 1, 2). When we are made angry by some contradiction, we fancy we shall find relief and quiet by giving vent to our anger in actions, or at least in words : but we are mistaken, it is not so; for after having done so, we shall find that we are much more disturbed than before. Whoever desires to persevere in uninterrupted peace must beware of ever yielding to ill-humour. And whenever anyone feels himself attacked by this ill-humour, he must do his utmost to banish it immediately; and he must not go to rest with it in his heart, but must divert himself from it by the perusal of some book, by singing some devout canticle, or by conversing on some pleasant subject with a friend. The Holy Spirit says : *Anger resteth in the bosom of a fool*—(Eccles. vii. 10). Anger remains a long time in the hearts of fools, who have little love for Jesus Christ; but if by stealth it should ever enter into the hearts of the true lovers of Jesus Christ, it is quickly dislodged, and does not remain. A soul that cordially loves the Redeemer never feels in a bad humour, because, as she desires only what God desires, she has all she wishes for, and consequently is ever tranquil and well-balanced. The Divine will tranquilises her in every misfortune that occurs; and thus she is able at all times to observe meekness towards all. But we cannot acquire this meekness without a great love for Jesus Christ. In fact, we know by experience that we are not meeker and gentler towards others, except when we feel an increased tenderness towards Jesus Christ.

II.

But since we cannot constantly experience this tenderness, we must prepare ourselves, in our mental prayer, to bear the crosses that may befall us. This was the practice of the Saints; and so they were ever ready to receive with patience and meekness, injuries, blows, and chastisements. When we meet with an insult from our neighbour, unless we are well practised in self-restraint, we shall find it extremely difficult to know what course to take in order not to yield to the force of anger. At the time, our passion will make it appear but reasonable for us to make an angry retort to the person who affronts us; but St. John Chrysostom says that it is not the right way to quench the fire which is raging in the mind of our neighbour by the fire of an indignant reply; to do so will only enkindle it the more: "One fire is not extinguished by another." Someone may say: But why should I use courtesy and gentleness towards an impertinent fellow that insults me without cause? But St. Francis de Sales replies: "We must practise meekness, not only with reason, but against reason."

We must therefore endeavour, on such occasions, to make a kind answer; and in this way we shall check the fire: *A mild answer breaketh wrath*—(Prov. xv. 1). But when the mind is troubled, the best expedient will be to keep silence. St. Bernard writes: "The eye troubled by anger sees not straight." When the eye is dimmed with passion, it no longer distinguishes between what is, and what is not, unjust; anger is like a veil drawn over the eyes, so that we can no longer discern between right and wrong; wherefore we must, like St. Francis de Sales, make a compact with our tongue: "I have made a compact with my tongue," he wrote, "never to speak while my heart is disturbed."

# Friday—Third Week after Pentecost

## Morning Meditation

### *III.—HOW TO CONVERSE CONTINUALLY AND FAMILIARLY WITH GOD.*

*Oh, taste and see that the Lord is sweet!* Our God dwelleth in the heights of Heaven, and yet He disdains not to occupy Himself day and night with His faithful servants in their cottages or their cells. There He bestows on them His Divine consolations which surpass all the delights the world can give. Never, then, forget God's sweet presence.

I.

By reason of His immensity, our God is in every place; but there are two places above all where He has His own peculiar dwelling. One is the highest Heaven, where He is present by that glory which He communicates to the Blessed; the other is upon earth, within the humble soul that loves Him: *Who dwelleth with a contrite and humble spirit*—(Is. lvii. 15). He, then, our God, dwelleth in the heights of Heaven; and yet He disdains not to occupy Himself day and night with His faithful servants in their cottages or their cells. And there He bestows on them His divine consolations, each one of which surpasses all the delights the world can give, and which he only does not desire who has no experience of them: *Oh, taste and see that the Lord is sweet*—(Ps. xxxiii. 9).

Friends in this world have hours in which they converse

together, and other times during which they are apart; but between God and you, if you wish, there shall never be one hour of separation: *Thou shalt rest, and thy sleep shall be sweet . . . the Lord will be at thy side* —(Prov. iii. 24). You may sleep, and God will place Himself at your side, and watch with you continually: *I will repose myself with him, and he shall be a comfort in my cares and grief*—(Wis. viii. 9-16). When you take your rest the Lord departs not from your pillow; He continues thinking always of you, that when you wake in the night He may speak to you by His inspirations, and receive from you some act of love, of oblation, of thanksgiving; so as to keep up even in those hours His gracious and sweet converse with you. Sometimes also He will speak to you in your sleep, and cause you to hear His voice, that on waking you may put in practice what He has spoken: *I will speak to him in a dream* —(Num. xii. 6).

He is there also in the morning, to hear from you some word of affection, of confidence; to be the depository of your first thoughts, and of all the actions which you promise to perform that day to please Him; of all the griefs, too, which you offer to endure willingly for His glory and love. But as He fails not to present Himself to you at the moment of your waking, fail not you, on your part, to give Him immediately a look of love, and to rejoice when your God announces to you the glad tidings that He is not far from you, as once He was by reason of your sins; but that He loves you, and would be beloved by you: and at that same moment He gives you the gracious precept, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart*—(Deut. vi. 5).

II.

Never, then, forget God's sweet presence, as do the greater part of men. Speak to Him as often as you can; for He does not grow weary of this or disdain it, as do the lords of the earth. If you love Him, you will

not be at a loss what to say to Him. Tell Him all that occurs to you about yourself and your affairs, as you would tell it to a dear friend. Look not upon Him as a haughty sovereign who will only converse with the great, and on great matters. He, our God, delights to abase Himself to converse with us, loves to have us communicate to Him our smallest daily concerns. He loves you as much, and has as much care for you, as if He had none others to think of but yourself. He is as entirely devoted to your interests as though the only end of His providence were to succour you, of His almighty power to aid you, of His mercy and goodness to take pity on you, to do you good, and gain by the delicate touches of His kindness your confidence and love. Manifest, then, to Him freely all your state of mind, and pray to Him to guide you to accomplish perfectly His holy will. And let all your desires and plans be simply bent to discover His good pleasure, and do what is agreeable to His divine Heart : *Commit thy way to the Lord*—(Ps. xxxvi. v.). *And desire of him to direct thy ways, and that all thy counsels may abide in him*—(Tob. iv. 20).

Say not : But where is the need of disclosing to God all my wants, if He already sees and knows them better than I? True, He knows them; but God makes as if He knew not the necessities about which you do not speak to Him, and for which you seek not His aid. Our Saviour knew well that Lazarus was dead, and yet He acted as if He knew it not, until Mary Magdalen had told Him of it, and then He comforted her by raising her brother to life again.

## Spiritual Reading

### *CORAM SANCTISSIMO.*

TWENTY-THIRD VISIT.

Many Christians submit to great fatigue, and expose themselves to many dangers, to visit the places in the Holy Land where our most loving Saviour was born, suffered and died. We need not undertake so long a journey, nor expose ourselves to so many dangers; the same Lord is near us, and dwells in the church, only a few steps distant from our homes. If pilgrims, says St. Paulinus, consider it a great thing to bring back a little dust from the Crib, or from the Holy Sepulchre in which Jesus was buried, with what ardour should we not visit the Blessed Sacrament, where the same Jesus is in person, and where we can go without encountering so much fatigue and so many dangers! A religious person, to whom God had given great love for the Most Blessed Sacrament, amongst other things wrote as follows in a letter: "I see that every good thing I have comes to me from the Most Blessed Sacrament. I have given and consecrated my whole self to Jesus in this Sacrament. I see innumerable graces which are not granted because people do not go to this divine Sacrament. I see the great desire that our Lord has to dispense His graces in this Sacrament. O holy Mystery! O Sacred Host! Where is it that God best displays His power, if it is not in this Host? For this Host contains all that God has ever done for us. Let us not envy the Blessed in Heaven, since on earth we have the same Lord, but with greater wonders of His love. Induce all with whom you speak to devote themselves to the Most Blessed Sacrament. I speak thus because this Sacrament enraptures my soul. Nor can I cease to speak of the Most Blessed Sacrament, which deserves so greatly to be loved.

I know not what to do for Jesus in this Sacrament." Thus the letter ends.

O ye Seraphim, who remain sweetly burning with love around your and my Lord, though it is not indeed for love of you, but of me, that this King of Heaven is pleased to be present in this Sacrament—O loving Angels, let me also burn with love; and do you enkindle your love in me that with you I also may burn! O my Jesus, teach me to know the greatness of the love Thou bearest to men, that at the sight of so great love my desire to love Thee and please Thee may go on always increasing! I love Thee, most amiable Lord, and I will always love Thee; and this only to please Thee.

*Ejac.* My Jesus, I believe in Thee, I hope in Thee, I love Thee, and I give myself to Thee!

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION as above, page 86.

### VISIT TO MARY.

Most amiable Virgin, St. Bonaventure calls thee "the Mother of orphans"; and St. Ephrem, moreover, calls thee "the receiver of orphans." Alas, these wretched orphans are no other than poor sinners who have lost God! Behold, then, I have recourse to thee, Most Holy Mary. I have lost my Father; but thou art my Mother, who must enable me to recover Him. In this my so great misfortune I call thee to my aid; do thou succour me. Shall I remain disconsolate? No; for Innocent III, speaking of thee, says: "Who ever called upon her and was not graciously heard by her?" And who ever prayed to thee, and was not heard and helped by thee? Who was ever lost who had recourse to thee? He alone is lost who has not recourse to thee. Then, my Queen, if thou desirest my salvation, enable me always to invoke and confide in thee.

*Ejac.* My own most Holy Mary, give me confidence in thee!

CONCLUDING PRAYER as on page 87.

## Evening Meditation

### *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

XXXVI.—HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST IS NEVER ANGRY WITH HIS NEIGHBOUR.

I.

But there are moments when it seems absolutely necessary to check insolence with severe words. David said : *Be angry, and sin not*—(Ps. iv. 5). Occasions do exist, therefore, when we may be lawfully angry, provided it be without sin. But here is just the difficulty : speculatively speaking, it seems expedient at times to speak and reply to some people in terms of severity, in order to make an impression on them ; but in practice it is very difficult to do this without some fault on our part ; so that the sure way is always to admonish, or to reply, with gentleness, and to scrupulously guard against all resentment. St. Francis de Sales said : " I have never been angry without afterwards repenting of it." And when, for some reason or other, we still feel angered, the safest way, as I said before, is to keep silence, and reserve the remonstrance till a more convenient moment, when the heart is cooled down.

We ought particularly to observe this meekness when we are corrected by our superiors or friends. St. Francis de Sales again writes : "To receive a reprimand willingly, shows that we love the virtue opposed to the fault for which we are corrected ; and consequently this is a great sign of progress in perfection."

Ah, my Jesus, grant that all my thoughts may be occupied in avoding whatever may offend Thee, and in promoting whatever may contribute to Thy good pleasure. Ward off every occasion that may draw me from Thy love. I strip myself of my liberty, and consecrate it entirely to Thy good will. I love Thee,

O Infinite Goodness! I love Thee, O my Delight! O Word Incarnate, I love Thee more than myself! Take pity on me, and heal whatever wounds remain in my poor soul from her past disloyalties towards Thee. I resign myself wholly into Thy arms, O my Jesus; I will be wholly Thine; I will suffer everything for love of Thee; and I ask of Thee nothing but Thyself! O Holy Virgin and my Mother Mary, I love thee, and I rely on thee; succour me by thy powerful intercession!

II.

We must besides practise meekness towards ourselves. It is a delusion of the devil to make us consider it a virtue to be angry with ourselves for committing some fault; far from it, it is a trick of the enemy to keep us in a state of trouble, that so we may be unfit for the performance of any good. St. Francis de Sales said: "Hold for certain that all such thoughts as create disquiet are not from God, Who is the Prince of peace, but proceed either from the devil, or from self-love, or from the good opinion we have of ourselves. These are the three sources from which all our troubles spring. When, therefore, any thoughts arise which throw us into trouble, we must immediately reject and despise them."

Meekness is also more especially necessary when we have to correct others. Corrections made with a bitter zeal often do more harm than good, especially when he who must be corrected is himself excited; in such cases the correction should be put off, and we must wait until he is cool. And we ourselves ought no less to refrain from correcting while we are under the influence of ill-temper; for then our admonition will always be accompanied with harshness; and the person in fault, when he sees that he is corrected in such a way, will take no heed of the admonition, considering it the mere effect of passion. This holds good as far as concerns the good of our neighbour; as concerns our personal advantage, let

us show how dearly we love Jesus Christ, by patiently and gladly supporting every ill-treatment, injury, and contempt.

O my despised Jesus, O Love, O Joy of my soul, Thou hast by Thy example made contempt most acceptable to Thy lovers! I promise Thee, from this day forward, to submit to every affront for the love of Thee, Who for love of me didst submit on earth to every species of revilement from men. Do Thou grant me strength to keep this promise. Enable me to know and to perform whatever Thou desirest at my hands. My God and my All, I crave no other good than Thyself, Who art Infinite Good! O Thou Who takest my interests so much to heart, grant that my only care may be to gratify Thee!

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## Saturday—Third Week after Pentecost

### Morning Meditation

### *IV.—HOW TO CONVERSE CONTINUALLY AND FAMILIARLY WITH GOD.*

When you are afflicted with sickness, temptation, persecution, or any other trouble, go at once to God, and beseech Him that His hand may help you. He will not, indeed, be displeased if in your desolation you go to your friends and find some relief. But after you have

applied to creatures, and they have been unable to comfort your heart, have recourse to your Creator, and say to Him : Lord, men are full of words. They cannot comfort me. Thou art all my Hope and all my Love !

I.

When you are afflicted with sickness, temptation, persecution, or other trouble, go at once to God, and beseech Him that His hand may help you. It is enough for you to present the affliction before Him; to come and say : *Behold, O Lord, I am in distress*—(Lam. i. 20). He will not fail to comfort you, or at least to give you strength to suffer that grief with patience; and it will turn out a greater good to you than if He had altogether freed you from it. Tell Him all the thoughts of fear or of sadness that torment you; and say to Him : My God, in Thee are all my hopes; I offer Thee this affliction, and resign myself to Thy will; but do Thou take pity on me,—either deliver me out of it, or give me strength to bear it. And He will truly keep with you that promise made in the Gospel to all those who are in trouble, to console and comfort them as often as they have recourse to Him : *Come to me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you*—(Matt. xi. 28).

He will not be displeased if in your desolation you go to your friends to find some relief; but He wills you chiefly to have recourse to Himself. At all events, therefore, after you have applied to creatures, and they have been unable to comfort your heart, have recourse to your Creator, and say to Him : Lord, men have only words for me; *My friends are full of words*—(Job xvi. 21); they cannot comfort me, nor do I any more desire to be comforted by them; Thou art all my hope, all my love. From Thee only will I receive comfort; and let my comfort be, on this occasion, to do what pleaseth Thee. Behold me ready to endure this grief through my

whole life, through all eternity, if such be Thy good pleasure. Only do Thou help me.

II.

Fear not that God will be offended if you sometimes gently complain, and say to Him : *Why, O Lord, hast Thou retired afar off?*—(Ps. ix. 1). Thou knowest, Lord, that I love Thee, and desire nothing but Thy love; in pity help me and forsake me not. And when the desolation lasts long, and troubles you exceedingly, unite your voice to that of Jesus in agony and dying on the Cross, and beseech His mercy : *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*—(Matt. xxvii. 46). But let the effect of this be to humble you yet more at the thought that he deserves no consolation who has offended God; and yet all the more to enliven your confidence, knowing that God does all things, and permits all, for your good : *All things work together unto good*—(Rom. viii. 28). Say with great courage, even when you feel most troubled and disconsolate : *The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?*—(Ps. xxvi. 1). Lord, it is Thine to enlighten me; it is Thine to save me; in Thee do I trust : *In thee, O Lord, have I hoped; let me never be confounded*—(Ps. xxx. 2). And thus keep yourself in peace, knowing there never was anyone who placed his hopes in God and was lost : *No one hath hoped in the Lord and hath been confounded*—(Ecclus. ii. 11). When you consider your God loves you more than you can love yourself, what do you fear? David comforted himself, saying : *The Lord is careful for me*—(Ps. xxxix. 18). Say to Him : therefore : Lord, into Thy arms I cast myself; I desire to have no thought but of loving and pleasing Thee; behold me ready to do what Thou requirest of me. Thou dost not only will my good, Thou art careful for it; unto Thee, then, do I leave the care of my salvation. In Thee do I rest, and will rest for evermore, since Thou willest that in Thee I should place all my hopes : *In*

*peace, in the self-same, I will sleep and I will rest; for thou, O Lord, hast singularly settled me in hope*—(Ps. iv. 9).

## Spiritual Reading

### *CORAM SANCTISSIMO.*

TWENTY-FOURTH VISIT.

*Verily thou art a hidden God*—(Is. xlv. 15). In no other work of divine love are these words so fully verified as in this adorable mystery of the Most Holy Sacrament, where our God is entirely hidden. When the Eternal Word took Flesh, He hid His divinity, and appeared as a Man on earth; but remaining with us in this Sacrament, He hides even His humanity, and, as remarks St. Bernard, appears only under the form of bread, to show thereby the tenderness of the love He bears us: "The divinity is hid, the humanity is hid: the bowels of charity alone appear." O my beloved Redeemer, at the sight of the excessive tenderness Thou hast for men, I am beside myself, O Lord, and know not what to say. In this Sacrament Thou goest so far for their love as to hide Thy majesty and lower Thy glory; Thou goest so far as even to consume and annihilate Thy divine life. And whilst Thou art on the altar Thou seemest to have nothing else to do than to love men, and to show them the affection Thou bearest them. And what gratitude do they show Thee in return, O great Son of God?

O Jesus, O too great Lover of men, allow me so to speak, for I see that Thou preferrest their advantage to Thine own glory. And didst Thou not know to how much contempt this loving design of Thine would expose Thee? I see, and before me Thou didst see it full well Thyself, that the greater part of men adore Thee not; neither will they acknowledge Thee in this Sacrament.

I know that these very men have gone so far as to trample on the consecrated Hosts, that they have thrown them on the ground, into water, and into fire. And I see the greater part even of those who believe in Thee, O my God, so far from repairing so many outrages by the homage of their devotion, either come to the church to offend Thee still more by their irreverences, or else abandon Thee on Thy altar, and sometimes even leave it unprovided with a lamp or the necessary ornaments!

Oh, that I could, my most sweet Saviour, but wash with my tears, or even with my blood, those unhappy places in which, in this Sacrament, Thy love and Thy enamoured Heart have been so greatly outraged! But if so much is not granted me, I desire at least, my Lord, and determine, to visit Thee often, in order to adore Thee as I now adore Thee, and this in compensation for the insults Thou receivest in this most divine Mystery. Accept, O Eternal Father, this scanty honour, which I, the most miserable of men, now offer Thee in reparation of the outrages offered to Thy Son in the Most Holy Sacrament; accept it in union with that infinite honour which Jesus Christ gave Thee on the Cross, and which He daily gives Thee in the Most Blessed Sacrament. O my Sacramental Jesus, would that I could fill all men with love for the Most Blessed Sacrament!

*Ejac.* O amiable Jesus, make Thyself known, make Thyself loved!

Spiritual Communion as above, page 86.

### Visit to Mary.

My most powerful Lady, in the midst of my misgivings as to my eternal salvation, how great is the confidence I feel when I have recourse to thee; and when I think that thou, my Mother, art, on the one hand, so rich in graces that St. John Damascene calls thee "a sea of graces";

St. Bonaventure, "the assemblage of graces," that is, the source in which all graces are congregated; St. Ephrem, "a fountain of grace and of all consolation"; and St. Bernard, "the fulness of every good"—and on the other hand, I reflect that thy desire to do us good is so great that thou esteemest thyself offended, as St. Bonaventure says, by him who does not ask thee for graces: "They sin against thee, O Lady," he says, "who do not ask of thee." O most rich, O most wise, and most merciful Queen, I see that thou knowest far better than I do the wants of my soul and that thou lovest me far more than I can love thee! Know, then, the grace for which I now ask thee; obtain me the grace which thou knowest to be the most expedient for my soul. Ask this favour from God and I am satisfied.

*Ejac.* My God, grant me the graces which Mary asks Thee for me.

Concluding Prayer as on page 87.

## Evening Meditation

### *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

*"Charity thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth."*

XXXVII.—HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST ONLY WISHES WHAT JESUS CHRIST WISHES.

I.

Charity and truth always go together; so that charity, conscious that God is the only and the true Good, detests iniquity, which is directly opposed to the Divine will,

and takes no satisfaction but in what pleases Almighty God. Hence the soul that loves God is heedless of what people say of her, and only aims at pleasing God. The Blessed Henry Suso says : " That man stands well with God who strives to conform himself to the truth, and for the rest is utterly indifferent to the opinion or treatment of mankind."

And as we have already more than once asserted, the sanctity and perfection of a soul consists in renouncement of self and in submission to the will of God; but now it will be well to descend more into detail. If, then, we would become saints, our whole endeavour must be, never to follow our own will, but always the will of God; the substance of all the precepts and Divine counsels is comprised in doing and suffering what God wills, and in the manner He wills it. Let us, therefore, entreat the Lord to bestow on us a holy liberty of spirit; that liberty of spirit which leads us to embrace whatever is pleasing to Jesus Christ, regardless of all feelings of repugnance arising from self-love and human respect. The love of Jesus Christ, makes those who love Him utterly indifferent; so that all things are alike to them, whether bitter or sweet. They do not wish for anything that pleases themselves, but only for that which is pleasing to God; they employ themselves in little and great things, be they pleasant or unpleasant, with the same peace of mind. It is enough for them if they please God.

## II.

St. Augustine says : "*Ama, et fac quod vis* : Love, and do what you like." Whoever really loves God seeks only to do what pleases Him; and in this is all his pleasure. St. Teresa says : " He that seeks but the gratification of one he loves, is gratified with all that pleases that person. Love in its perfection produces this result; it makes a person heedless of all private interests and self-satisfaction, and concentrates all his thoughts on endeavouring

to please the person beloved, and to do all he can to honour him himself, and to make him honoured by others. O Lord, all our ills come from not keeping our eyes fixed on Thee! Were we solely intent on advancing, we should soon come to the end of our journey; but we fall and stumble a thousand times, and we even lose our way, for want of looking attentively to the right path." Here we may see what should be the single aim of all our thoughts, actions, desires, and prayers, namely, the pleasure of God; our way to perfection must be this, to walk according to the will of God.

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# Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

## Morning Meditation

### *V.—HOW TO CONVERSE CONTINUALLY AND FAMILIARLY WITH GOD.*

*Think of the Lord in goodness.* In these words the Wise Man exhorts us to have more confidence in God's Mercy than dread of His divine Justice, for God is immeasurably more inclined to bestow favours than to punish. *Mercy exalteth itself above judgment.*

1.

*Think of the Lord in goodness*—(Wis. i. 1). In these words the Wise Man exhorts us to have more confidence

in the divine mercy than dread of the divine justice; since God is immeasurably more inclined to bestow favours than to punish; as St. James says, *Mercy exalteth itself above judgment*—(James ii. 13). Hence the Apostle St. Peter tells us that in all fears, whether about our interests for time or for eternity, we should commit ourselves altogether to the goodness of our God, Who has the greatest care of our safety: *Casting all your care upon him, for he hath care of you*—(1 Peter v. 7). Oh, what a beautiful meaning does this lend to the title which David gives to the Lord, when he says that our God is the God Who makes it His care to save: *Our God is the God of salvation*—(Ps. lxvii. 21), which signifies, as Bellarmine explains it, that the office peculiar to the Lord is, not to condemn, but to save all. For while He threatens with His displeasure those who disregard Him, He promises, on the other hand, His assured mercies to those who fear Him, as the divine Mother said in her Canticle: *And his mercy is to them that fear him*—(Luke i. 50). I set before you, devout soul, all these passages of Scripture, that when the thought disquiets you—Am I to be saved or not? Am I predestined or not?—You may take courage, and understand from the promises He makes you what desire God has to save you, if only you are resolved to serve Him and to love Him as He commands.

II.

When you receive pleasant news, do not act like those unfaithful, thankless souls who have recourse to God in time of trouble, but in time of prosperity forget and forsake Him. Be as faithful to Him as you would to a friend who loves you and rejoices in your good; and, go therefore, at once and tell Him of your gladness, and praise Him and give Him thanks, acknowledging it all as a gift from His hands; and rejoice in that happiness because it comes to you of His good pleasure. Rejoice, therefore, and comfort yourself in Him alone: *I will*

*rejoice in the Lord and I will joy in God my Jesus*—(Habac. ii. 18). Say to Him: My Jesus, I bless, and will ever bless Thee, for granting me so many favours, when I deserved at Thy hands not favours, but chastisements for the affronts I have offered Thee. *All fruits, the new and the old, my Beloved, I have kept for thee*—(Cant. vii. 13). Lord, I give Thee thanks; I keep in memory all Thy bounties, past and present, to render Thee praise and glory for them for ever and ever.

But if you love your God, you ought to rejoice more in His blessedness than in your own. He who loves a friend very much, sometimes takes more delight in that friend's good name than if it were his own. Comfort yourself, then, in the knowledge that your God is infinitely blessed. Often say to Him: My beloved Lord, I rejoice more in Thy blessedness than in any good of mine; yes, for I love Thee more than I love myself.

Another mark of confidence highly pleasing to your most loving God is this: that when you have committed any fault, you be not ashamed to go at once to His feet and seek His pardon. Consider that God is so greatly inclined to pardon sinners that He laments their perdition, when they depart far from Him and live as dead to His grace. Therefore does He lovingly call them, saying: *Why will you die, O house of Israel? Return ye, and live*—(Ezech. xviii. 31, 32). He promises to receive the soul that has forsaken Him, as soon as she returns to His arms: *Turn ye to me, . . . and I will turn to you*—(Zach. i. 3). Oh, if sinners did but know with what tender mercy the Lord stands waiting to forgive them! *The Lord waiteth, that he may have mercy on you*—(Is. xxx. 18). Oh, did they but know the desire He has, not to chastise, but to see them converted, that He may embrace them, that He may press them to His Heart! He declares: *As I live, saith the Lord God, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live*—(Ezech. xxxiii. 11). He even says: *And then come and accuse me, saith the*

*Lord: if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow.*—(Is. i. 18). As though He had said: Sinners, repent of having offended Me; if I do not pardon you, *accuse me*; upbraid Me, and treat Me as one unfaithful. But no, I will not be wanting to My promise. If you will come, know this: that though your consciences are dyed deep as crimson by your sins, I will make them by My grace as white as snow. In a word, God has declared that when a soul repents of having offended Him, He forgets all its sins: *I will not remember all his iniquities*—(Ezech. xviii., 22).

## Spiritual Reading

### *CORAM SANCTISSIMO.*

TWENTY-FIFTH VISIT.

St. Paul praises the obedience of Jesus Christ, saying that He obeyed His Eternal Father even unto death: *becoming obedient even unto death*—(Philipp. ii. 8). But in this Sacrament He has gone still farther; for here He has been pleased to become obedient, not only to His Eternal Father, but also to man; and not only unto death, but as long as the world shall last; so that we can say: "He has become obedient even unto the consummation of the world." He, the King of Heaven, comes down from Heaven in obedience to man, and then seems to dwell and converse there, in order to obey men: *And I do not resist.* There He remains without moving Himself; He allows Himself to be placed where men will, be it for exposition in the Monstrance, or to be enclosed in the Tabernacle. He allows Himself to be carried wheresoever He is borne, be it into houses or through the streets; He allows Himself to be given in Communion to whomsoever He is administered, be they just or sinners. St. Luke says that whilst He dwelt on earth He obeyed the Most Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph;

but in this Sacrament He obeys as many creatures as there are priests on earth : *and I do not resist*—(Is. l. 5).

Permit me now to address Thee, O most loving Heart of my Jesus, from which indeed all the Sacraments flowed forth, but principally this Sacrament of love. I would gladly give Thee as much glory and honour as Thou givest in the Holy Sacrament to the Eternal Father. I know that on this altar Thou still lovest me with that same love with which Thou didst love me when Thou didst close Thy divine life in the midst of so much anguish on the Cross. O Divine Heart, enlighten all those who know Thee not with the knowledge of Thyself ! Through Thy merits deliver from Purgatory, or at least relieve, the afflicted souls, who are already Thy spouses for all eternity. I adore Thee, I thank Thee, I love Thee, in union with all souls who at this moment love Thee, be they on earth or in Heaven. O most pure Heart, purify my heart from all attachment to creatures, and fill it with Thy holy love ! O sweetest Heart of Jesus, possess my heart, so that henceforward it may be all Thine, and may be always able to say : *Who, then, shall separate us from the love of God, . . . which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord?*—(Rom. viii. 38). Write, O Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, upon my heart all the bitter sorrows which for so many years Thou didst endure on earth with so much love for me, that, on seeing them, I may henceforward desire, or at least endure with patience, all the sorrows of this life. Most humble Heart of Jesus, give me a share of Thy humility. Most meek Heart, impart Thy sweetness to me. Take from my heart all that displeases Thee; convert it wholly to Thee, so that I may no longer will or desire other than what Thou willest. In a word, grant that I may live only to obey Thee, only to love Thee, only to give Thee pleasure. I know that I, indeed, owe Thee much; and that Thou hast indeed placed me under great obligations : it will be but little if I consume and wear myself out for Thee.

*Ejac.* O Heart of Jesus, Thou art the sole Lord of my heart!

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION as above, page 86.

### VISIT TO MARY.

St. Bernard says that Mary is that heavenly Ark in which, if we take refuge, we shall certainly be delivered from the shipwreck of eternal damnation: "She is the ark in which we escape shipwreck." The Ark in which Noe escaped from the general wreck of the world was indeed a type of Mary. But Hesychius says that Mary is a more spacious, a stronger, and a more compassionate Ark. Only a few men and a few beasts were received into and saved by the Ark of Noe; but Mary, our Ark, receives all who take refuge under her mantle, and with certainty saves them. Unfortunate should we be had we not Mary! But still, my Queen, how many are lost! And why? Because they have not recourse to thee. And who would ever be lost had he recourse to thee?

*Ejac.* Grant, most holy Mary, that we may always have recourse to thee!

CONCLUDING PRAYER as on page 87.

## Evening Meditation

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## *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

### XXXVIII.—HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST WISHES WHAT JESUS CHRIST WISHES.

I.

God wishes us to love Him with our whole heart: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart*

—(Matt. xxii. 37). That person loves Jesus Christ with his whole heart who says to Him with the Apostle : *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*—(Acts ix. 6). Lord, signify to me what Thou wilt have me do; for I desire to perform all. And let us be persuaded that whilst we desire what God desires, we desire what is best for ourselves; for assuredly God only wishes what is best for us. St. Vincent de Paul said : " Conformity with the will of God is the treasure of a Christian and the remedy for all evils; since it comprises abnegation of self and union with God and all virtues." In this, then, is all perfection : *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Jesus Christ promises us that *not a hair of your head shall perish*—(Luke xxi. 18), which is as much as to say, that the Lord rewards us for every good thought we have of pleasing Him, and for every tribulation embraced with patience in conformity to His holy will. St. Teresa says : " The Lord never sends a trial without remunerating it with some favour as often as we accept it with resignation."

II.

But our conformity to the Divine will must be entire, without any reserve, and constant, without withdrawal. In this consists the height of perfection; and to this, I repeat, all our thoughts, all our desires, all our works, and all our prayers ought to tend. Some souls given to prayer, on reading of the ecstasies of St. Teresa and St. Philip Neri, come to wish to enjoy themselves these supernatural unions. Such wishes must be banished as contrary to humility; if we really desire to be saints, we must aspire after true union with God, which is to unite our will entirely to the will of God. St. Teresa said : " Those persons are deceived who fancy that union with God consists in ecstasies, raptures, and sensible enjoyments of Him. It consists in nothing else than in submitting our will to the will of God; and this submission is perfect when our will is detached from every-

thing, and so completely united with that of God that all its movements depend solely on the will of God. This is the real and essential union which I have always sought after, and continually beg of the Lord." And then she adds : " Oh, how many of us say this, and seem to ourselves to desire nothing besides this; but, miserable creatures that we are, how few of us attain to it." Such, indeed, is the undeniable truth; many of us say : O Lord ! I give Thee my will, I desire nothing but what Thou desirest,—but, in the event of some trying occurrence, we know not how to yield calmly to the Divine will. And this is the source of our continually complaining that we are unfortunate in the world, and that we are the butt of every misfortune, and so of our dragging on an unhappy life.

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## Monday—Fourth Week after Pentecost

### Morning Meditation

### *VI.—HOW TO CONVERSE CONTINUALLY AND FAMILIARLY WITH GOD.*

As soon as you fall into any fault, raise your eyes to God, make an act of love, and with a humble confession of your fault, hope most assuredly for His pardon, saying to Him : *Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick.* Between friends who sincerely love, it often happens that when one has displeased the other and then humbles him-

elf and seeks pardon, their friendship becomes thereby tronger than ever.

I.

As soon as you fall into any fault, raise your eyes to God, make an act of love, and with humble confession of your fault, hope assuredly for His pardon, and say to Him: *Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick*—(Jo. xi. 3), that heart which Thou dost love is sick, is full of sores: *heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee*—(Ps. xl. 5). Thou seekest after penitent sinners; behold, here is one at Thy feet, who has come in search of Thee. The evil is done already; what have I now to do? Thou wilt not have me lose courage: after this my sin Thou dost still love me, and I too love Thee. Yes, my God, I love Thee with all my heart; I repent of the displeasure I have given Thee; I purpose never to offend any more. Thou Who art that God, *merciful and gracious, patient and of much compassion*—(Ps. lxxxv. 5), forgive me; make me to hear what Thou didst say to Magdalen: *Thy sins are forgiven thee*—(Luke vii. 48), and give me strength to be faithful unto Thee for the time to come.

That you may not lose courage at such a moment, cast a glance at Jesus on the Cross; offer His merits to the Eternal Father; and thus hope with certainty for pardon, since for your sake He *spared not even his own Son*—(Rom. viii. 32). Say to Him with confidence: *Look on the face of thy Christ*—(Ps. lxxxiii. 10). My God, behold Thy Son, dead for my sake; and for the love of that Son forgive me! Attend well, devout soul, to the instruction commonly given by masters of the spiritual life. After unfaithful conduct you must at once have recourse to God, though you may have repeated your unfaithfulness a hundred times in a day. But after having recourse to the Lord, be at once in peace. Otherwise, whilst you remain cast down and disturbed at the fault you have committed, your con-

verse with God will be small; your trust in Him will fail; your desire to love Him grow cold; and you will be little able to go forward in the way of the Lord. On the other hand, by having immediate recourse to God to ask forgiveness, and to promise Him amendment, your very faults will serve to advance you further in the divine love. Between friends who sincerely love, it often happens that when one has displeased the other and then humbles himself and asks pardon, their friendship thereby becomes stronger than ever. Do you likewise; see to it that your very faults serve to bind you yet closer in love to your God.

II.

In any kind of doubt, either on your own account or that of others, never cease to act towards your God with a confidence like to that of faithful friends, who consult together on every matter. So should you take counsel with Him, and beseech Him to enlighten you that you may decide on what will be most pleasing to Him: *Put those words in my mouth, and strengthen the resolution in my heart*—(Judith ix. 18). Lord, tell me what Thou wouldst have me to do or to answer; and thus will I act. *Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth*—(1 Kings iii. 10).

Use towards God also the freedom of recommending not only your own needs, but also those of others. How agreeable will it be to God that sometimes you forget even your own interests to speak to Him of the advancement of His glory, of the miseries of others, especially of those who groan in affliction, of those souls, His spouses who in Purgatory sigh after the vision of Himself, and of poor sinners who are living destitute of His grace. For these especially say to Him: Lord, Thou Who art so amiable and worthy of infinite love, how dost Thou then, endure to see such a number of souls in the world on whom Thou hast bestowed so many favours, and who

et will not know Thee? Ah, my God, object of all ove, make Thyself known, make Thyself loved! *Hallowed be thy name! Thy Kingdom come!* May Thy Name be adored and loved by all! May Thy love eign in all hearts! Ah, let me not depart without ranting me some grace for those unfaithful souls for hom I pray.

## Spiritual Reading

### *CORAM SANCTISSIMO.*

TWENTY-SIXTH VISIT.

*Rejoice, and praise, O thou habitation of Sion; for reat is he that is in the midst of thee, the Holy One of srael*—(Is. xii. 6). O God, and what joy ought not we aen to conceive, what hopes and affections, in knowing aat in the midst of our land, in our churches, near our omes, the Holy of Holies, the true God, dwells and ves in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar! He ho by His presence alone renders the Saints in Heaven essed! He Who is Love itself! "It is not so much aat He has love, as that He is Love itself," says . Bernard. This Sacrament is not only a Sacrament of ve, but is Love itself, it is God Himself, Who for the mense love He bears His creatures calls Himself, and , Love itself; *God is Love*—(1 Jo. iv. 16).

But I hear Thee complain, O my Sacramental Jesus: *was a stranger and you took me not in*—(Matt. xxv. ); that Thou camest on earth to be our Guest for our od, and that we have not welcomed Thee. Thou art ght, Lord, Thou art right; and I am one of those grateful creatures who have left Thee alone, without en visiting Thee. Chastise me as Thou pleasest; but t by depriving me of Thy presence, which is the astisement I deserve; no, I will repair my fault, and

the indignities which I have heaped upon Thee. From this day forward I will not only visit Thee often, but will remain with Thee as long a time as I can. O most compassionate Saviour, be pleased to make me faithful to Thee; and grant that I may also, by my example excite others to keep Thee company in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I hear the Eternal Father Who says: *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* A God then, finds all His complacency in Thee: and shall not I a miserable worm, find mine in dwelling with Thee in this valley of tears! O consuming Fire, destroy in me all affection for earthly things; for they alone can render me unfaithful and take me away from Thee. Thou canst do it if Thou wilt: *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.* Thou hast already done so much for me, do this also: banish from my heart all love which does not tend towards Thee. Behold, I give myself all to Thee; I now dedicate all the remainder of my life to the love of the Most Blessed Sacrament. Thou O Sacramental Jesus, hast to be my comfort, my love in life, and at the hour of my death, when Thou wilt come to be my Viaticum and my Guide to Thy blessed kingdom. Amen, amen. So do I hope; so may it be.

*Ejac.* When, O my Jesus, shall I behold Thy beautiful Face!

Spiritual Communion as above, page 86.

## Visit to Mary.

In thee, our own most holy Mother, we find the remedy for all our woes; in thee we find strength in our weakness; for St. Germanus calls thee, the "strength itself of our weakness;" in thee we find a door by which to make our exit from the slavery of sin; for St. Bonaventure calls thee "the gate of liberty." In thee we find our certain peace: for the same Saint calls thee "the safe repose of men." In thee we find relief in our

miserable life, for thou art "the solace of our pilgrimage," as St. Laurence Justinian calls thee. In thee, in a word, we find divine grace and God Himself, for St. Bonaventure calls thee "the throne of God's grace"; and St. Proclus, "the bridge by which God descends to men"; that happy bridge by which God, Who had been driven to a distance by our sins, returns to dwell by His grace in our souls.

*Ejac.* O Mary, thou art my strength, my deliverance, my peace and salvation!

CONCLUDING PRAYER as on page 87.

## Evening Meditation

### THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST

#### XXXIX.—HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST WISHES WHAT JESUS CHRIST WISHES.

I.

If we were conformed to the Divine will in every trouble, we would undoubtedly become saints, and be the happiest of mankind. This, then, should form the chief object of our attention, to keep our will in unbroken union with the will of God in every occurrence of life, be it pleasant or unpleasant. It is the admonition of the Holy Spirit: *Winnow not with every wind*—(Ecclus. v. 11). Some people resemble the weathercock, which turns about with every wind that blows. If the wind is fair and favourable to their desires, they are all gladness and condescension; but if there blow a contrary wind, and things fall out against their desires, they are all sadness and impatience; this is why they never become saints; and this is why their life is unhappy, for in the present life adversity will always befall us in a greater

measure than prosperity. St. Dorotheus said that to receive from the hands of God whatever happens is a great means to keep ourselves in continual peace and tranquillity of soul. And the Saint relates that on this account the Ancient Fathers of the Desert were never seen angry or melancholy, for they accepted whatever happened to them joyfully, as coming from the hands of God. Oh, happy the man who lives wholly united and abandoned to the Divine will! He is neither puffed up by success nor depressed by reverses; for he well knows that all alike comes from the self-same hand of God. The will of God is the single rule of his own will; thus he only does what God wishes him to do, and he only desires what God does. He is not anxious to do many things, but to accomplish with perfection what he knows to be acceptable to God. Accordingly, he prefers the minutest obligations of his state of life to the most glorious and important actions, well aware that in the latter self-love may find a great share, whereas in the former there is certainly the will of God.

II.

Thus we, too, shall be happy when we receive from God all the dispositions of His Providence in the spirit of perfect conformity to His Divine will, utterly regardless whether or not they coincide with our private inclinations. The saintly Mother de Chantal said: "When shall we come to relish the Divine will in every event that happens, without paying attention to anything else but the good pleasure of God, from Whom it is certain that prosperity and adversity proceed alike from motives of love and for our best interests? When shall we resign ourselves unreservedly into the arms of our most loving heavenly Father, entrusting to Him the care of our persons and our affairs, and reserving nothing for ourselves but the sole desire of pleasing God?" The friends of St. Vincent de Paul said of him while he

was still on earth : " Vincent is always Vincent." By which they meant to say that the Saint was ever to be seen with the same smiling face, whether in prosperity or in adversity. He was always himself, because, as he lived in total abandonment of himself to God, he feared nothing and desired nothing but what was pleasing to God. St. Teresa said : " By this holy abandonment that admirable liberty of spirit is generated which those who are perfect possess, wherein they find all the happiness in this life which they can possibly desire; inasmuch as, fearful of nothing, and desirous or wanting for nothing in the things of this world, they possess all."

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# Tuesday—Fourth Week after Pentecost

## Morning Meditation

### *VII.—HOW TO Cconverse CONTINUALLY AND FAMILIARLY WITH GOD.*

To long but little for Heaven is to set small value on the great good of the eternal Kingdom our Redeemer purchased for us by His death. St. Teresa so greatly desired death in order to see God, that she was dying with the desire to die, and so composed that loving *Canticle* of hers : *I die because I do not die.*

**1.**

It is said that in Purgatory those souls who in this life have had but little longing for Heaven are punished with

a particular suffering, called the pain of languor; and with reason; because to long but little for Heaven is to set small value on the great good of the eternal Kingdom our Redeemer purchased for us by His death. Forget not, therefore, devout soul, frequently to sigh after Heaven. Say to your God that it seems to you an endless time till you go and see Him, and love Him face to face. Long ardently to depart out of this banishment, this scene of sinning, and danger of losing His grace, that you may arrive in that land of love where you may love Him with all your powers. Say to Him again and again : Lord, so long as I live on this earth, I am always in danger of forsaking Thee and losing Thy love. When will it be that I quit this life, wherein I am ever offending Thee, and come to love Thee with all my soul, and unite myself to Thee, with no danger of losing Thee again? Saint Teresa was ever sighing in this way, and used to rejoice when she heard the clock strike, because another hour of life, and of the danger of losing God, was past and gone. For she so greatly desired death in order to see God that she was dying with the desire to die; and so she composed that loving *Canticle* of hers, *I die, because I do not die.*

II.

In a word, if you desire to delight the loving Heart of your God, be careful to speak to Him as often as you are able, and with fullest confidence that He will not disdain to answer and speak with you in return. He does not, indeed, make Himself heard in a voice that reaches your ears, but in a voice that your heart can well perceive, when you withdraw from converse with creatures, to occupy yourself in conversing with your God alone : *I will lead her into the wilderness, and I will speak to her heart*—(Osee ii. 14). He will then speak to you by such inspirations, such interior lights, such manifestations of His goodness, such sweet touches of your heart, such tokens of forgiveness, such experi-

ence of peace, such hopes of Heaven, such rejoicings within you, such sweetness of His grace, such loving and close embraces—in a word, such voices of love—as are well understood by those souls whom He loves, and who seek for nothing but God alone.

## Spiritual Reading

### *CORAM SANCTISSIMO.*

TWENTY-SEVENTH VISIT.

The holy Church sings in the Office of the Most Blessed Sacrament : *There is no other country, however great, whose gods are nigh as our God is nigh to us* —(Deut. iv. 7). When the Gentiles heard how far our God carried His works of love, they exclaimed : " Oh, how good a God is the God of the Christians ! And, indeed, although the Gentiles imagined their gods according to their own caprices—yet, if you read history, you will never find in all their fables, and among the many gods they invented, that they went so far as even to imagine a god so enamoured of men as is our true God, Who, to show His love for His adorers, and to enrich them with graces, has worked such a prodigy of love as to become their constant Companion, and to remain night and day concealed on their altars, seeming as if He knew not how to separate Himself from them, even for a moment : *He hath made a remembrance of his wonderful works*—(Ps. cx. 4).

Thou, then, my most sweet Jesus, hast been pleased to work the greatest of Thy miracles in order to satisfy the excessive desire Thou hast to remain always near and present to us. Why, then, do men fly from Thy presence ? And how can they live for so long a time at a distance from Thee, or visit Thee so seldom ? How is

it that when in Thy presence they get so weary that a quarter of an hour appears an age? Oh, patience of my Jesus, how great art thou! Yes, my Lord, I understand Thee; Thy patience is great, because the love Thou bearest to men is great: and this it is which, so to say, forces Thee to dwell always in the midst of such ungrateful creatures.

Ah, my God, Who, because Thou art infinite in perfections art also infinite in love, permit not that I should for the future be, as I have hitherto been, of the number of those ungrateful ones. Grant me a love equal to Thy merits and to my own obligations. At one time I also was weary of Thy presence, either because I loved Thee not, or because I loved Thee too little; but if by Thy grace I am enabled to love Thee much, I shall no longer find it tedious to remain even for whole days and nights at Thy feet in the Most Holy Sacrament. O Eternal Father, I offer Thee Thine own Son Himself; accept Him for me, and through His merits give me so ardent and tender a love towards the Most Blessed Sacrament that, constantly turning towards some church in which Jesus dwells, I may think of, and desire with loving anxiety, the time when I may be able to go and entertain myself in His presence.

*Ejac.* My God, for the love of Jesus, give me a great love for the Most Blessed Sacrament.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION as above, page 86.

## VISIT TO MARY.

Mary is that Tower of David, of which the Holy Ghost says in the sacred Canticles: *It is built with bulwarks; a thousand bucklers hang upon it, all the armour of valiant men.*—(Cant. iv. 4). A tower built with a thousand fortresses, and containing a thousand shields and weapons, for the benefit of those who have recourse to it. Thou art, then, according to an expression of

St. Ignatius the Martyr, O most holy Mary, a most powerful defence for all those who are engaged in battle. Oh, how constantly are my enemies attacking me in order to deprive me of the grace of God and of thy protection, my most dear Lady! But thou art my strength. Thou, indeed, dost not disdain to battle for those who trust in thee; for St. Ephrem calls thee "the bulwark of all who confide in thee." Do thou, then, defend me and fight for me who have such great hope and confidence in thee.

*Ejac.* Mary, Mary, thy name is my defence!

CONCLUDING PRAYER as on page 87.

## Evening Meditation

### *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

#### XL.—HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST WISHES WHAT JESUS CHRIST WISHES.

I.

Many fabricate a sort of sanctity according to their own inclinations; some, inclined to melancholy, make sanctity consist in living in seclusion; others, of a busy temperament, in preaching and in making up quarrels; some, of an austere nature, make sanctity consist in penitential inflictions and macerations; others, who are naturally generous, in distributing alms; some in saying many vocal prayers; others in visiting Sanctuaries; and all their sanctity consists in such or the like practices. External acts are the fruit of the love of Jesus Christ; and true love itself consists in a complete conformity to the will of God; and as a consequence of this, in denying ourselves and preferring what is most pleasing to God, and solely because He deserves it.

II.

Others wish to serve God, but it must be in that employment, in that place, with those companions, and in such circumstances; or else they either neglect their duty, or at least do it with a bad grace: such as these are not free in spirit, but are slaves of self-love, and on that account reap little merit even from what they perform; moreover, they live in perpetual disquiet, since their attachment to self-will makes the yoke of Jesus Christ become heavy to them. The true lovers of Jesus Christ love only that which is pleasing to Jesus Christ, and for the sole reason that it does please Him; and they love it *when* it pleases Jesus Christ, *where* it pleases Him, and *how* it pleases Him; whether He chooses to employ them in honourable functions, or in the mean and lowly occupations; in a life of fame in the world, or in one hidden and despised. This is what is meant by the pure love of Jesus Christ; hence we must labour to overcome the cravings of our self-love, which seeks to be employed in those works only that are glorious, or that are according to our own inclinations. And what will it profit us to be the most honoured, the most wealthy, the greatest in the world, without the will of God? The Blessed Henry Suso said, "I would rather be the vilest insect on earth by the will of God than a Seraph in Heaven by my own will."

# Wednesday—Fourth Week after Pentecost

## Morning Meditation

### *VIII.—HOW TO CONVERSE CONTINUALLY AND FAMILIARLY WITH GOD.*

Be assured that though in the fulfilment of your daily duties you should be employed in the meanest occupations, the faithful discharge of them will certainly make you a saint. The Lord does not require of you lofty flights of contemplation, or formidable penances: all that He does demand is that you perform all your actions well.

I.

To make a brief summary of what has already been said at large, I shall not omit to suggest a devout practice whereby you may fulfil all your daily actions in a manner pleasing to God.

When you wake in the morning let it be your first thought to raise your mind to God, offering to His glory all that you will do or suffer the day, praying Him to assist you by His grace. Then make your other morning acts of devotion, acts of thanksgiving and of love, prayers and resolutions to live that day as though it were to be the last day of your life. Father St. Jure recommends the making in the morning of a compact with the Lord that every time you make a certain sign, as placing your hand upon your heart, or raising your eyes to Heaven or to the Crucifix, and the like, you

wish thereby to make an act of love, of desire to see God loved by all, of oblation of yourself, and other acts of the same kind. When you have made these acts and placed your soul in the Heart of Jesus and under the mantle of Mary, and have prayed the Eternal Father that for the love of Jesus and Mary He would protect you during the day, be careful, before you engage in anything else, to make your mental prayer, or Meditation, at least for half an hour; and let your specially chosen Meditation be the sorrow and the shame which Jesus Christ suffered in His Passion. This is the subject dearest to loving souls, and the one that most enkindles divine love within them. If you would make spiritual progress, let three devotions be especially dear to you—devotion to the Passion of Jesus Christ, to the Most Holy Sacrament, and to the ever-blessed Virgin. In mental prayer, make again and again acts of contrition, of love to God and oblation of yourself. The Venerable Father Charles Caraffa, Founder of the Pious Workers, said that one fervent act of the love of God made in the morning is sufficient to maintain the soul in fervour throughout the whole day.

II.

Besides the more specific acts of devotion, such as Confession, Communion, recitation of the Divine Office, etc., whenever you are engaged in external occupations, as in study, labour, or in any other employment that may be proper to your condition in life, never forget, when commencing your work to offer it up to God, praying for His assistance to enable you to perform it in a perfect manner; and do not omit to retire frequently into the cell of your heart, in order to unite yourself to God, according to the practice of St. Catherine of Sienna. In short, whatever you do, do it with God and for God. In going out of your room or house, and on returning again, always commend yourself to the divine Mother

by saying a Hail Mary. When sitting down to meals, make an offering to God of the distaste or gratification you may find in what you eat and drink; and, on rising from table, return thanks to Him and say: Lord, how great is Thy goodness to one who has offended Thee so much! In the course of the day be careful to make your Spiritual Reading, to make a Visit to the Most Holy Sacrament and to Most Holy Mary; and in the evening to say the Rosary and to make an examination of conscience, together with the Christian acts of Faith, Hope, Charity, Contrition, resolutions of amendment, and of receiving the Holy Sacraments during life and at the hour of death, forming also the intention of gaining all the indulgences that you can gain. And again, on going to bed, reflect that if you had your deserts, you would be lying down in the flames of hell. Then, with the Crucifix in your arms, compose yourself to sleep, saying: *In peace, in the self-same, I will sleep and take my rest*—(Ps. iv. 9).

I would wish briefly to point out to you the many Indulgences that are attached to the various prayers or acts of devotion. Whence it is desirable for you in the morning to make the intention of gaining all the indulgences in your power during the day. To him who makes acts of the three Theological Virtues mentioned above—of Faith, etc.—there are granted Seven Years and Seven Quarantines each day; and by continuing them for a month a Plenary Indulgence may be gained, provided he confesses, communicates, and prays for the intentions of the Pope. This indulgence is *in articulo mortis*. In like manner, you should form the intention of gaining also all the Indulgences granted for saying the Rosary on Beads properly blessed; the *Angelus Domini* three times a day; the Litany of our Blessed Lady; the *Salve Regina*; the *Ave Maria*, and the *Gloria Patri*; also for saying: "Blessed be the holy and immaculate and most pure Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary!"; "Praised now and forever be the Most Holy Sacrament!"; for reciting the prayer, *Anima Christi*,

etc.; for bowing the head at the *Gloria Patri*, and at the most Holy Names of Jesus and Mary; as also for hearing Mass; for making half an hour's mental prayer, to which besides a partial, there is also a Plenary Indulgence attached, provided it be continued for a month, on condition of Confession and Communion, and prayers for the Church; for genuflecting before the Most Holy Sacrament, and for kissing the Crucifix. Always have the intention formed of gaining every such indulgence.

## Spiritual Reading

### *CORAM SANCTISSIMO.*

TWENTY-EIGHTH VISIT.

God, having given us His own Son, says St. Paul, what good thing is there we can fear He might deny us? *How hath he not also with him given us all things?*—(Rom. viii. 32). We know, indeed, that all the Eternal Father has, He has given to Jesus Christ: *The Father has given him all things into his hands*—(Jo. xiii. 2). Let us, then, ever thank the goodness, the mercy, the liberality of our most loving God, Who has been pleased to make us rich in all good things, and in every grace, by giving us Jesus in the Sacrament of the Altar: *In all things you are made rich in him . . .so that nothing is wanting to you in any grace*—(1 Cor. i. 5, 7).

Therefore, O Saviour of the world, O Incarnate Word, if I desire to possess Thee, I can consider Thee as mine and all mine. But can I at the same time say I am all Thine, as Thou desirest? Ah, my Lord, prevent it; and never let the world witness such disorder and ingratitude as that I should not be Thine when Thou desirest me! Ah, no; let it never be! If it has been so hitherto, let it never be so again. I now, with the utmost determina-

tion, consecrate myself entirely to Thee; for time and eternity I consecrate to Thee my life, my will, my thoughts, my actions, my sufferings. Behold me Thine; as a victim consecrated to Thee I bid farewell to all creatures, and offer my whole self to Thee. Consume me with the flames of Thy divine love. No, I am determined that creatures shall no longer share my heart. The proofs Thou hast given me of the love Thou bearest me, even at a time when I did not love Thee, make me hope that Thou certainly acceptest me now that I love Thee, and out of love give myself to Thee.

Eternal Father, I now offer Thee all the virtues, the actions, the affections of the Heart of Thy dear Jesus. Accept them, and by His merits, which are all mine—for He has given them to me—grant me the graces Jesus asks Thee for me. With these merits I thank Thee for the many mercies Thou hast shown me; with these I satisfy for what I owe Thee for my sins; through these I hope for every grace from Thee—pardon, perseverance, Paradise, and, above all, the crowning gift of Thy pure love. I well see that to all these gifts I myself place impediments; but do Thou also remedy this. I ask it of Thee in the Name of Jesus Christ, Who has promised: *Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name that will I do*—(Jo. xiv. 13). Then Thou canst not refuse me. Lord, my only desire is to love Thee, to give myself to Thee without reserve, and no longer to be ungrateful to Thee, as I have hitherto been. Behold me, and graciously hear me; grant that this may be the day of my entire conversion to Thee, so that I may never more cease to love Thee. I love Thee, my God! I love Thee, Infinite Goodness! I love Thee, my Love, my Paradise, my Good, my Life, my All!

*Ejac.* My Jesus Who art all mine, Thou desirest me, and I desire Thee!

Spiritual Communion as above, page 86.

### Visit to Mary.

What relief do I not feel in my miseries, and what consolation in my tribulations, what strength do I not find in the midst of temptations, when I remember and call thee to my aid, O my most sweet and most holy Mother Mary! Yes, indeed, you were right, O ye Saints, in calling my Lady, "the haven of those who are in tribulation," with St. Ephrem; "the repairer of our calamities," and "the solace of the miserable," with St. Bonaventure; and "the rest from our mournings," with St. Germanus. My own Mary, do thou console me. I see myself loaded with sins, and surrounded by enemies, without virtue, and cold in my love towards God. Comfort me, comfort me, and let my consolation be to begin a new life—a life which will be really pleasing to thy Son and to thee.

*Ejac.* Change me, O Mary my Mother, change me; thou canst do it.

Concluding Prayer as on page 87.

## Evening Meditation

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## *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

### XLI.—HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST WISHES WHAT JESUS CHRIST WISHES.

#### I.

Jesus Christ said: *Many will say to me: 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and cast out devils in thy name, and done many miracles in thy name?* But the Lord will answer them: *I never knew you; depart from me, you that work iniquity*—(Matt. vii. 22, 23). Depart from Me; I never acknowledged you for My disciples, because you preferred to follow your own

inclinations rather than My will. And this is especially applicable to those who labour much for the salvation or perfection of others, while they themselves continue to live on in the mire of their imperfections. Perfection consists: *Firstly*, in a true contempt of oneself. *Secondly*, in a thorough mortification of our own appetites. *Thirdly*, in a perfect conformity to the will of God; whosoever is wanting in one of these virtues is out of the way of perfection. On this account a great servant of God said: *It was better for us in our actions to have the will of God rather than His glory as their sole motive*; for, in doing the will of God, we at the same time promote His glory; whereas in proposing to ourselves the glory of God, we frequently deceive ourselves, and follow our own will under pretext of glorifying God. St. Francis of Sales said: "There are many who say to the Lord: I give myself wholly to Thee without reserve; but few indeed, in point of fact, practically embrace this abandonment, which consists in a certain indifference in accepting all kinds of events, just as they fall out according to the order of Divine Providence, afflictions as well as consolations, slights and injuries as well as honour and glory."

II.

It is therefore in suffering and in embracing with cheerfulness whatever cuts against the grain of our own inclinations, that we can discover who is a true lover of Jesus Christ. Thomas à Kempis says that "he is not deserving of the name of lover who is not ready to endure all things for his Beloved, and to follow in all things the will of his Beloved." On the contrary, Father Balthazar Alvarez says that whoever quietly resigns himself to the Divine will in troubles "travels to God post-haste." And the saintly Mother Teresa said: "What greater acquisition can we make, than to have some proof that we are pleasing God?" And to this I add that we cannot have a more certain proof of this than

by peacefully embracing the crosses which God sends us. We please God by thanking Him for His benefits on earth; but, says Father John of Avila, one *Blessed be God!* uttered in adversity is worth six thousand acts of thanksgiving in our prosperity.

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## Thursday—Fourth Week after Pentecost

### Morning Meditation

### *IX.—HOW TO CONVERSE CONTINUALLY AND FAMILIARLY WITH GOD.*

That you may be able ever to keep yourself in a state of recollection and union with God, turn everything you see or hear into an occasion for raising your mind to God. Running water will remind you how your life is running on and carrying you nearer and nearer to death; and the lamp going out for want of oil will warn you that thus also shall you one day see your life come to an end.

I.

That you may be able to keep yourself ever in a state of recollection and union with God, as long as you live, and as far as may be possible, turn everything that you may see or hear into an occasion for raising your mind to God, or for taking a glance into eternity. For example, when you see running water reflect that your

life is also in like manner running on, and carrying you nearer and nearer to death. When you see a lamp going out for want of oil, reflect that thus also one day you will have to see your life come to its end. When you see the graves or remains of the dead, consider that you too will one day be buried in a grave. When you see the great ones of this world rejoicing in their wealth or distinction, pity their folly, and say : For me God is sufficient : *Some trust in chariots, some in horses, but we in the name of the Lord*—(Ps. xix. 8). Let them glory in such vanity; I will make nothing my glory but the grace and the love of my God. When you behold the pompous funerals, or the fine sepulchral monuments of the great ones that are dead, say : If these are damned what is the good of all this pomp to them?

II.

When you behold the sea in a calm or in storm, consider the difference there is between a soul in, and a soul out of, the grace of God. When you see a tree that is withered, consider that a soul without God is serviceable for nothing but to be cast into fire. If you ever happen to see one who has been guilty of some great crime, trembling with shame and fright in the presence of his judge, or of his father, or of his bishop, consider what the terror of a sinner will be in the presence of Christ, his Judge. When it thunders, and you become alarmed, reflect how those miserable ones who are damned tremble as they hear continually in hell the thunders of the divine wrath. If you ever see one who has been condemned to suffer a painful death, and who says : Is there, then, no longer any means for my escaping death? consider what will be the despair of a soul when it is condemned to hell, as it says, Is there, then, no longer any means for escaping from eternal ruin?

## Spiritual Reading

### *CORAM SANCTISSIMO.*

TWENTY-NINTH VISIT.

*Behold I stand at the gate and knock*—(Apoc. iii. 20). O most loving Shepherd, Who, not satisfied with sacrificing Thyself once to death on the altar of the Cross for the love of Thy flock, hast moreover been pleased to hide Thyself in this divine Sacrament on the altars of our churches, to be always near, and to knock at the doors of our hearts, and thus obtain admission! Ah, did I but know how to enjoy Thy nearness to me as did the sacred Spouse in the Canticles, who says: *I sat down under his shadow, whom I desired*—(Cant. ii. 3). Ah, did I but love Thee, did I but really love Thee, my most amiable Jesus, I also should never wish to leave the foot of a Tabernacle, night or day; and fixing myself near Thy Majesty, concealed under the apparent shadow of the sacred species, I also should find that divine sweetness and that happiness which souls enamoured of Thee find in Thy Presence. Ah, do Thou be graciously pleased to draw me by the odour of Thy beauties, and of the immense love which Thou dost manifest in this Sacrament: *Draw me, we will run after thee to the odour of thine ointments*—(Cant. i. 3). Yes, my Saviour, I will leave creatures and all earthly pleasures, to run after Thee in this Sacrament: *As olive plants round about thy table*—(Ps. cxxvii. 3). Oh, what abundant fruits of virtues do those happy souls, like olive plants, bring forth to God, who assist with love before the sacred Tabernacle! But I am ashamed to appear before Thee, O my Jesus, so naked and so devoid of virtue. Thou hast commanded that all who approach the altar to honour Thee should present a gift: *Thou shalt not appear empty before me*—(Exod. xxiii. 15). What, then, am I to do? Am I

no more to appear before Thee? Ah, no; this would not please Thee. Poor as I am, I will approach Thee; and do Thou provide me with the gifts Thou desirest. I see that Thou dwellest in this Sacrament, not only to reward Thy lovers, but also to provide for the poor out of Thy riches.

Be it so, then, let us now begin. I adore Thee, O King of my heart, and true Lover of men. O Shepherd, loving Thy sheep beyond all bounds, to this throne of Thy love I now approach; and having nothing else to present Thee, I offer Thee my miserable heart, that it may be entirely consecrated to Thy love and to Thy good pleasure. With this heart I can love Thee, and I will love Thee as much as I am able. Draw it, then, to Thyself, and bind it wholly to Thy will, so that, filled with consolation, I may be able from henceforth to say, as Thy dear disciple said, that I am bound by the chains of Thy love: *I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ*—(Eph. iii. 1). Unite me, O my Lord, entirely to Thyself, and make me forget myself, that I may have the happiness one day to lose all things and even myself, to find Thee alone, and to love Thee forever. I love Thee, my Sacramental Lord. To Thee do I bind myself, to Thee do I unite myself. Make me find Thee; make me love Thee, and do Thou never more separate Thyself from me.

*Ejac.* My Jesus, Thou alone art sufficient for me!

Spiritual Communion as above, page 86.

## Visit to Mary.

St. Bernard calls Mary "the royal road of the Saviour"; the safe road by which to find the Saviour and salvation. Since, then, it is true, O Queen, that thou art, as the same Saint says, "the chariot in which our souls go to God"—the one who guides us to Him—ah, Lady, thou must not suppose that I shall advance

towards God if thou dost not carry me in thine arms! Carry me, carry me; and if I resist, carry me by main force. Do all the violence thou canst by the sweet attractions of thy charity to my soul and to my rebellious will, that they may leave creatures, to seek God alone and His divine will. Show the court of Heaven the greatness of thy power. After so many wonders of thy mercy, show this one more; make a poor creature who is far from God wholly His.

*Ejac.* O Mary, thou canst make me a saint; I hope for this grace from thee!

CONCLUDING PRAYER as on page 87.

## Evening Meditation

### *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

XLII.—HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST WISHES WHAT JESUS CHRIST WISHES.

I.

We must receive with resignation, not merely the crosses which come directly from God; for instance, ill-health, scanty talents, accidental reverses of fortune; but such, moreover, as come indirectly from God, and directly from our fellow-men; for instance, persecutions, thefts, injuries; for all, in reality, come from God. David was one day insulted by one of his vassals called Semei, who not only upbraided him with words of contumely, but even threw stones at him. One of the courtiers would have forthwith avenged the insult by cutting off the head of the offender, but David replied: *Let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bid him curse David*—(2 Kings xvi. 10); or, in other words, God makes use of

him to chastise me for my sins, and therefore He allowed him to pursue me with injuries.

II.

Wherefore St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi says that all our prayers should have for their end to obtain from God the grace to follow His holy will in all things. Certain souls, greedy of spiritual dainties in prayer, go in search of these banquets of sweet and tender feelings; but courageous souls who seek sincerely to belong wholly to God ask Him only for light to understand His will, and for strength to put it into execution. In order to attain to purity of love, it is necessary to submit our will in all things to the will of God: "Never consider yourselves," said St. Francis de Sales, "to have arrived at the purity which you ought to have, as long as your will is not cheerfully obedient, even in things the most repulsive, to the will of God." "Because," as St. Teresa remarks, "the giving up of our will to God draws Him to unite Himself with our lowliness." But this can never be obtained except by means of mental prayer and of continual petitions addressed to the Divine Majesty, nor without a cordial desire to belong entirely to Jesus Christ without reserve.

O most amiable Heart of my Divine Saviour, Heart enamoured of mankind, since Thou lovest me with such a depth of tenderness; O Heart, in fine, worthy to rule over and possess all our hearts, would that I could make all men comprehend the love Thou bearest them, and the tender caresses Thou dost lavish on those who love Thee without reserve! O Jesus, my Love, be pleased to accept the offering and the sacrifice which I this day make to Thee of my entire will! Only make known what Thou wouldst have me to do; for I am determined to do all by the help of Thy grace.

# Friday—Fourth Week after Pentecost

## Morning Meditation

### *X.—HOW TO CONVERSE CONTINUALLY AND FAMILIARLY WITH GOD.*

The heavens and the earth and all things in them, says St. Augustine, tell me to love Thee, O my God! St. Teresa used to say that when she saw beautiful hills and slopes they seemed to reproach her for her ingratitude to God.

I.

When your eye rests on scenes in the country or along the sea-shore, on flowers or fruits, and you are delighted by the sight and scent of all, say: Behold, how many are the beautiful creatures that God has created for me in this world, in order that I may love Him; and what further enjoyments does He not keep prepared for me in Paradise? St. Teresa used to say that when she saw any beautiful hills or slopes, they seemed to reproach her for her own ingratitude to God. And the Abbot de Rancé, Founder of La Trappe, said that the beautiful creatures around him reminded him of his own obligation to love God. St. Augustine also said the same thing, crying out aloud: "Heaven and earth and all things tell me to love Thee." It is related of a certain holy man that in passing through the fields he would strike with a little stick the flowers and plants along his way, saying: "Be silent! Do not reproach

me any longer for my ingratitude to God. I have understood you; be silent! Say no more!" When St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi held in her hand any beautiful fruit or flower, she used to feel herself smitten by divine love, saying to herself: "Behold, my God has thought from eternity of creating this fruit, this flower, in order to give it me as a token of the love He bears towards me."

II.

When you see the rivers and brooks, reflect that as the water which you behold keeps running on to the ocean without ever stopping, so ought you to be ever hastening on to God, Who is your only Good. When you happen to be in a vehicle drawn by beasts of burden, say: See what labour these innocent animals go through for my service; and how much pains do I myself take in order to serve and please my God? When you see a little dog, which for a miserable morsel of bread is so faithful to its master, reflect how much greater reason you have to be faithful to God Who has created and preserved and provided for you, and heaps upon you so many blessings. When you hear the birds sing, say: Hearken, O my soul, to the praise these little creatures are giving to their Creator; and what are you doing? Then do you also praise Him with acts of love. On the other hand, when you hear the cock crow, recall to your memory that there once was a time when you also, like Peter, denied your God; and then renew your contrition and your tears. So, likewise, when you see the house or place where you have sinned, turn yourself to God and say: *The sins of my youth and my ignorance remember not, O Lord*—(Ps. xxiv. 7).

When you behold the valleys, consider that as their fertility is due to the waters that run down from the mountains, so from Heaven do graces descend upon the souls of the humble, and pass by the proud. When you see a beautifully ornamented church, consider the beauty

of a soul in a state of grace, which is a real temple of God. When you behold the sea, consider the immensity and the greatness of God. When you see fire, or candles lighted on an altar, say : How many years is it since I ought to have been cast into hell to burn ! But since Thou, O Lord, hast not sent me there, make this heart of mine burn with love for Thee, as that wood and those candles burn. When you look up at the sky, all studded with stars, say with St. Andrew of Avellino : " O my feet, you will one day have those stars beneath you."

In order frequently to recall to mind the Mysteries of our Saviour's love, when you see hay, a manger, or a cave, let the Infant Jesus in the Stable of Bethlehem be present in your recollection. When you see a saw, a hammer, a plane, or an axe, remember how Jesus laboured like a mere working boy in the shop at Nazareth. Then if you see ropes, thorns, nails, or pieces of wood, reflect on the Passion and death of our Redeemer. St. Francis of Assisi, on seeing a lamb, would begin to weep, saying, " My Lord, like a lamb, was led to death for me." Again, when you see altars, chalices, or patens, recall to mind the greatness of the love which Jesus Christ has borne us in giving us the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist.

## Spiritual Reading

### *CORAM SANCTISSIMO.*

THIRTIETH VISIT.

*Why hidest thou thy face?*—(Job xiii. 24). Job feared when he saw that God hid His face : but to know that Jesus Christ veils His majesty in the Most Blessed Sacrament should not inspire us with fear, but rather with greater love and confidence; since it is precisely to

increase our confidence, and with greater evidence to manifest His love, that He remains on our altars concealed under the appearance of bread. Novarinus says: "God in hiding His face in this Sacrament discloses His love." And who would ever dare to approach Him with confidence, and lay bare before Him his affections and desires, did this King of Heaven appear on our altars in the splendours of His glory?

Ah, my Jesus, what a loving invention was this of the Most Blessed Sacrament, in which Thou hidest Thyself under the appearance of bread, in order to make Thyself loved and that Thou mayest be found on earth by all who desire Thee! The Prophet was right in saying that men should speak and raise their voices throughout the world, in order to make known to all men, to what an excess the inventions of the love of our good God go for us · *Make his works known among the people*—(Is. xii. 4). O most loving Heart of my Jesus, worthy to possess the hearts of all creatures—Heart all and ever full of flames of most pure love! O consuming Fire, consume my whole being, and give me a new life of love and grace! Unite me to Thyself in such a way that I may never more be separated from Thee. O Heart open to be the refuge of souls, receive me! O Heart, which on the Cross was so agonised for the sins of the world, give me true sorrow for my sins! I know that in this Sacrament Thou preservest the same sentiments of love for me which Thou hadst when dying on Calvary; and therefore Thou hast an ardent desire to unite me wholly to Thyself. And is it possible that I should any longer resist yielding up my entire self to Thy love and to Thy desire? Ah, by Thy merits, my beloved Jesus, be pleased Thyself to wound me, to bind me, to force me, to unite me in all things to Thy Heart. I am now determined by Thy grace to give Thee all the pleasure I possibly can, by trampling under foot all human respect, my inclinations, repugnances, all my tastes and conveniences, which may prevent me from entirely pleasing Thee. Do Thou, my Lord, so help me, that I may

execute this determination in such a way that henceforth all my works, opinions, and affections may be in conformity with Thy good pleasure. O love of God, do Thou drive all other loves from my heart! O Mary, my hope, thou art all-powerful with God, obtain for me the grace to be a faithful servant of the pure love of Jesus until death. Amen, amen. So I hope; so may it be in time and eternity!

*Ejac. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?* —(Rom. viii. 35).

Spiritual Communion as above, page 86.

## Visit to Mary.

St. Bernard affirms that the love of Mary towards us cannot be greater or more powerful than it is; hence by her affection she is always abundant in her compassion for us, and by her power she is plentiful in the relief she affords us: "The most powerful and compassionate charity of the Mother of God abounds in tender compassion and in kind relief; she is equally rich in both."

So that, my most pure Queen, thou art rich in power, and rich in compassion; thou art able and desirest to save all. I therefore beseech thee now, and I will do so always, in the words of the devout Blosius: "O Lady, protect me in my combats, and strengthen me when I am wavering." O most holy Mary, in this great battle in which I am engaged with hell, do thou always succour me; but when thou seest me wavering and likely to fall, O Lady, do thou then extend thy hand with greater promptitude, and sustain me with greater vigour. O God! how many temptations have I still to overcome before my death! Mary, my hope, my refuge, my strength, do thou protect me, and never allow me to lose the grace of God. And on my part I resolve always and

instantly to have recourse to thee in all temptations, saying :

*Ejac.* Help me, Mary ! Mary, help me.

CONCLUDING PRAYER as on page 87.

## Evening Meditation

### *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

#### XLIII.—HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST WISHES WHAT JESUS CHRIST WISHES.

I.

Now what is the surest way to know and ascertain what God requires of us? There is no surer way than to practise obedience to our superiors and directors. St. Vincent de Paul said the will of God is never better complied with than when we obey our superiors. The Holy Ghost says : *Much better is obedience than the victims of fools*—(Eccles. iv. 17). God is more pleased with the sacrifice we make to Him of our own will, by submitting it to obedience, than with all other sacrifices which we can offer Him; because in other things, as in alms-deeds, fastings, mortifications, and the like, we give of what is ours to God, but in giving Him our will, we give Him everything. So that when we say to God : O Lord, make me know by means of obedience what Thou requirest of me, for I wish to comply with all, —we have nothing more to offer Him.

Whoever, therefore, gives himself up to obedience, must needs detach himself totally from his own opinion. "What though each one," says St. Francis de Sales, "*has* his own opinions, virtue is not thereby violated; but virtue is violated by *the attachment* we have to our

own opinions." But, alas! this attachment is the hardest thing to part with; and hence there are so few persons wholly given to God, because few render a thorough submission to obedience. There are some persons so fondly attached to their own opinion that, on receiving an obedience, although the thing enjoined suits their inclination, yet, from the very fact of its being commanded, they lose all fancy for it, all wish to discharge it; for they find no relish in anything but in following the dictates of their individual will. How different is the conduct of Saints! Their only happiness flows from the execution of what obedience imposes on them. The saintly Jane Frances de Chantal once told her daughters that they might spend the Recreation-day in any manner they chose. When the evening came, they all went to her, to beg most earnestly that she would never again grant them such a permission; for they had never spent such a wearisome day as that on which they had been set free from obedience.

II.

It is a delusion to think that anyone can be possibly better employed than in the discharge of what obedience has imposed. St. Francis de Sales says: "To desert an occupation given by obedience in order to unite ourselves with God by prayer, by reading, or by recollection, would be to withdraw from God to unite ourselves with our own self-love." St. Teresa adds, moreover, that whoever performs any work, even though it be spiritual, yet against obedience, assuredly works by the instigation of the devil, and not by Divine inspiration, as he perhaps flatters himself; "because," says the Saint, "the inspirations of God always come in company with obedience." To the same effect she says elsewhere: "God requires nothing more of a soul that is determined to love Him than obedience." "A work done out of obedience," says Father Rodriguez, "outweighs every

other that we can imagine." To gather a straw off the ground from obedience is of greater merit than a protracted prayer, or a discipline to blood, done out of our own head. This caused St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi to say that she would rather be engaged in some exercise from obedience than in prayer; "because in obedience I am certain of the will of God, whereas I am by no means so certain of it in any other exercise." According to all spiritual masters, it is better to leave off any devout exercise through obedience than to continue it without obedience. The Most Blessed Virgin Mary revealed once to St. Bridget that he who relinquishes some mortification through obedience reaps a twofold profit; since he has already obtained the merit of the mortification by the good-will to do it, and he also gains the merit of obedience by foregoing it. One day the famous Father Francis Arias went to see the Blessed John of Avila, his intimate friend, and he found him pensive and sad; he asked him the reason of it, and received this answer: "Oh, happy you who live under obedience, and are sure of doing the will of God. As for me, who shall warrant me whether I do a thing more pleasing to God in going from village to village, catechising the poor peasants, or in remaining stationary in the confessional to hear every one that presents himself? Whereas he that is living under obedience is always sure that whatever he performs by obedience is according to the will of God, or rather that it is what is most acceptable to God." Let this serve as a consolation for all those who live under obedience.

# Saturday—Fourth Week after Pentecost

## Morning Meditation

### *XI.—HOW TO CONVERSE CONTINUALLY AND FAMILIARLY WITH GOD.*

During the day make frequently an offering of yourself to God, as St. Teresa used to do, saying : Lord, here I am ! Do with me what pleaseth Thee ! She used to say that all he who practises prayer should seek is to conform his will to the divine will; and let him be assured that in this consists the highest perfection.

I.

During the day make frequently an offering of yourself to God, as St. Teresa used to do, saying : " Lord, here am I ! Do with me what pleaseth Thee ! Declare to me Thy will, that I may do it for Thee; I wish to do it thoroughly." Then repeat, as often as you can, acts of love towards God. St. Teresa used also to say that acts of love are the fuel by which the holy love of God is to be kept on fire within the heart. When the Venerable Sister Seraphine of Capri was one day considering that the mule belonging to the convent had not the power of loving God, she expressed her compassion for it thus : " Poor brute; thou neither knowest nor canst love thy God"; and the mule commenced to weep so that the tears fell in streams from its eyes; so likewise do you, when beholding any animal which has not the capacity

for knowing or loving God, animate yourself, who can love Him, to make more frequent acts of holy love. Whenever you fall into any fault, humble yourself for it immediately; and, with an act of more fervent love, endeavour to rise again. When anything adverse happens, immediately make an offering to God of what you have to suffer, bringing your will into conformity with God's will; and ever accustom yourself under all adverse circumstances to repeat these words: "Thus does God will; thus I will too." Acts of resignation are the acts of love that are most precious and acceptable to the Heart of God.

II.

When you have to decide upon anything, or to give any counsel of importance, first commend yourself to God, and then set about your undertaking, or give your opinion. As often as you can during the day, after the example of St. Rose of Lima, repeat the prayer, *Deus, in adjutorium meum intende*: "Lord, come to my assistance! Do not leave me in my own hands!" And for this end frequently turn to the Image of the Crucified, or to that of the Most Holy Mary, which is in your room; and do not omit to make frequent invocations of the Names of Jesus and Mary, especially in time of temptation. Since God is infinite goodness, His desire of communicating His graces to us is perfect. The Venerable Father Alvarez one day saw our Saviour with His hands full of graces, and going about in search of those to whom He might dispense them. But it is His will that we should ask them of Him. *Ask, and ye shall receive*—(Jo. xvi. 24), otherwise He will draw back His hands, whereas, on the contrary, He will willingly open them to those who call upon Him. And who is there that hath called upon Him and God despised him by not answering his prayer? *Who hath called upon him and he hath despised him?*—(Ecclus. ii. 12). And David tells us that the Lord shows not merely mercy, but great

mercy, to those who call upon Him : *For thou, O Lord, art sweet and mild and plenteous in mercy to all that call upon thee*—(Ps. lxxxv. 5).

Oh, how good and bountiful is the Lord to him who seeks Him lovingly ! *The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh him*—(Lam. iii. 25). If He lets Himself be found even by him who seeks Him not—*I was found by them that did not seek me* (Rom. x. 20)—how much more willingly will He let Himself be found by one who does seek Him—and seeks Him, too, in order to serve and to love Him !

To conclude : St. Teresa says that holy souls in this world have to conform themselves by love to what the souls of the Blessed do in Heaven. As the Saints in Heaven occupy themselves only with God, and have no other thought or joy than in His glory and in His love, so also must this be the case with you. While you are in this world, let God be your only happiness, the only object of your affections, the only end of your actions and desires, until you come to that Eternal Kingdom where your love will be in all things perpetual and complete, and your desires will be perfectly fulfilled and satisfied.

## Spiritual Reading

### *CORAM SANCTISSIMO.*

THIRTY-FIRST VISIT.

Oh, how beautiful a sight it was to behold our sweet Redeemer on that day, when, fatigued by His journey, He sat down, all engaging and loving, beside the well to await the Samaritan woman that He might convert and save her ! *Jesus, therefore, sat thus on the well*—(Jo. iv. 6). It is precisely thus that this same Lord seems sweetly to dwell with us all day long, having come down

from Heaven upon our altars, which are as so many Fountains of grace, whereat He waits and invites souls to keep Him company, at least for a while, that He may in this way draw them to His perfect love. From every altar on which Jesus remains in the Most Holy Sacrament He seems to address all, saying : O men ! why do you fly from my Presence? Why do you not come and draw near to One Who loves you so much, and Who remains thus annihilated for your sake? Why do you fear? I am not now come on earth to sit in judgment, but I have hidden Myself in this Sacrament of love only to do good, and to save all who have recourse to Me : *I came not to judge the world but to save the world*—(Jo. xii. 47).

Let us, then, understand that as Jesus Christ in Heaven is *always living to make intercession for us* —(Heb. vii. 25), so in the Sacrament of the Altar He is continually, night and day, exercising the compassionate office of Advocate; offering Himself as a Victim for us to the Eternal Father, thus to obtain for us His mercy and innumerable graces. Therefore the devout Thomas à Kempis says that we ought to approach Jesus to converse with Him in the Blessed Sacrament without fear of chastisement, and unrestrained, as with a beloved friend, " as one who loves speaking to his beloved; as a friend to a friend."

Since, then, Thou thus givest me permission, let me, O my hidden King and Lord, now open my heart to Thee with confidence, and say : " O my Jesus ! O Enamoured of souls, I well know the injustice men do Thee. Thou lovest them, and art not loved by them; Thou doest good to them, and receivest insults; Thou desirest to make them hear Thy voice, and they give Thee no ear; Thou offerest them graces, and they refuse them. Ah, my Jesus, and is it true that I also at one time joined these ungrateful creatures in thus displeasing Thee? O God, it is but too true ! But I am determined to amend and to endeavour, during the time that I have to live, to make up for the displeasure I have caused

Thee, by doing all that I possibly can to please Thee and to give Thee consolation. Tell me, O Lord, what Thou dost wish from me, and I will execute all without reserve : make known Thy will to me by means of holy obedience, and I hope to accomplish it. My God, I now resolutely promise Thee that I will never, from this day forward, omit what I know to be the more pleasing to Thee, even were it to cost me the loss of all—relatives, friends, esteem, health, yea life itself. Let all perish, provided Thou art pleased. Happy loss, indeed, when all is lost and sacrificed to satisfy Thy Heart, O God of my soul! I love Thee, O sovereign Good, worthy of love above every other good; and in loving Thee I unite my poor heart to all the hearts with which the Seraphim love Thee; I unite it to the heart of Mary, to the Heart of Jesus. I love Thee with my entire self; Thee alone will I love, and Thee alone will I always love.

*Ejac.* My God, my God, I am Thine, and Thou art mine!

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION as above, page 86.

## VISIT TO MARY.

Blessed Amadeus says that our most blessed Queen Mary is always in the divine Presence, acting as our advocate, and interposing with God by her prayers, which are most powerful : "The most blessed Virgin stands before the face of her Creator, interceding with her most powerful prayers for us." "For," he adds, "she well sees our miseries and our dangers, and as our most clement and sweet Lady compassionates and succours us with a mother's love."

Thou, my advocate and my most loving Mother, thou even now seest the miseries of my soul; thou seest my dangers and prayest for me. Pray, pray, and cease not to pray, until thou seest me saved and thanking thee in Heaven. The devout Blosius tells me that thou, O sweet

Mary, art, after Jesus, the certain salvation of those who are thy faithful servants. Ah ! this grace I now ask of thee : grant me the happy lot of being thy faithful servant until death ; that after death I may go to bless thee in Heaven, where I shall be certain never more, as long as God is God, to leave thy sacred feet.

*Ejac.* O Mary, my Mother, grant that I may be ever thine.

CONCLUDING PRAYER as on page 87.

## Evening Meditation

### *THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

XLIV.—HE THAT LOVES JESUS CHRIST WISHES WHAT JESUS CHRIST WISHES.

I.

For obedience to be perfect, we must obey with the *will* and with the *judgment*. To obey with the *will* signifies to obey willingly, and not by constraint, after the fashion of slaves ; to obey with the *judgment* means to conform our judgment to that of the superior, without examining what is commanded. St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi remarks on this : " Perfect obedience demands a soul without judgment." To the like purpose, St. Philip Neri said that, in order to obey with perfection, it was not enough to execute the thing commanded, but it must be done without reasoning on it ; taking it for certain that what is commanded us is for us the most perfect thing we can do, although the opposite may be better before God.

This holds good not merely for Religious, but likewise for seculars living under obedience to their spiritual directors. Let them request their director to prescribe them rules for the guidance of their affairs, both spiritual

and temporal; and so they will make sure of doing what is best. St. Philip Neri said: "Let those who are desirous of progressing in the way of God submit themselves to a prudent confessor, whom they should obey as in God's place. By so doing, we are certain of not having to render an account to God of the actions we perform." He said, moreover, that we must place faith in the confessor, because the Lord will not permit him to err; that nothing is so sure of cutting off all the snares of the devil as to do the will of others in the performance of good; and that there is nothing more dangerous than to wish to direct ourselves according to our private fancy. In like manner St. Francis de Sales says, in speaking of the direction of the spiritual father as a means of walking securely in the path of perfection: "This is the maxim of all maxims."

O Jesus, I give Thee my whole heart and all my will. It was at one time, alas! rebellious against Thee; but now I dedicate it wholly to Thee. "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Tell me what Thou requirest of me, and lend me Thy assistance; for I will leave nothing undone. Dispose of me and of all that concerns me, as Thou pleasest; I accept of all, and resign myself to all. O Love deserving of infinite love, Thou hast loved me so as even to die for me; I love Thee with my whole heart, I love Thee more than myself, and into Thy hands I abandon my soul. On this very day I bid farewell to every worldly affection, I take leave of everything created, and I give myself without reserve to Thee; through the merits of Thy Passion receive me, and make me faithful unto death. My Jesus, my Jesus, from this day forward I will live only for Thee, I will love none but Thee, I will seek nothing else than to do Thy blessed will. Aid me by Thy grace, and aid me, too, by thy protection, O Mary, my hope.

II.

"Seek as ye will," says the devout Avila, "you will never so surely find the will of God as in the way of this humble obedience, so much recommended and so practised by all the ancient servants of God." The same thing is affirmed by St. Bernard, St. Bernardine of Sienna, St. Antoninus, St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa, John Gerson, and all theologians and masters of the spiritual life; and St. John of the Cross said that to call this truth in question is almost to doubt of the Faith. The words of the Saint are: "Not to be satisfied with what the confessor says is arrogance and a want of faith." Among the maxims of St. Francis de Sales are the two following, most consolatory for scrupulous souls:

Firstly, a truly obedient soul was never yet lost.

Secondly, we ought to be satisfied on being told by our spiritual director that we are going on well, without seeking to be convinced of it ourselves.

It is the teaching of many doctors, as of Gerson, St. Antoninus, Cajetanus, Navarrus, Sanchez, Bonacina, Cordovius, Castropalao, and the doctors of Salamanca, with others, that the scrupulous person is bound, under strict obligation, to act in opposition to scruples, when from such scruples there is reason to apprehend grievous harm happening to soul or body, such as the loss of health, or of intellect; wherefore scrupulous persons ought to have greater scruple at not obeying the confessor than at acting in opposition to their scruples. To sum up, therefore, all that has been said in this chapter, our salvation and perfection consist: (1) In denying ourselves; (2) In following the will of God; (3) In praying Him always to give us strength to do both one and the other.

*What have I in heaven, and besides thee what do I desire upon earth? Thou art the God of my heart and the God that is my portion forever*—(Ps. lxxii. 26). My beloved Redeemer, infinitely amiable, since Thou hast

come down from Heaven to give Thyself wholly to me, what else shall I seek for on earth or in Heaven besides Thee, Who art the Sovereign Good, the only Good worthy to be loved? Be Thou then, the sole Lord of my heart, do Thou possess it entirely; may my soul love Thee alone, obey Thee alone, and seek to please no other than Thee. Let others enjoy the riches of this world, I wish only for Thee : Thou art and shalt ever be my Treasure in this life and in eternity.

I will not despair of becoming a saint on account of the sins of my past life; for I know, my Jesus, that Thou didst die in order to pardon the truly penitent. I love Thee now with my whole heart, with my whole soul; I love Thee more than myself, and I bewail, above every other evil, ever having had the misfortune to despise Thee, my Sovereign Good. Now I am no longer my own, I am Thine; O God of my heart, dispose of me as Thou pleasest. In order to please Thee, I accept of all the tribulations Thou mayest choose to send me—sickness, sorrow, troubles, ignominies, poverty, persecution, desolation—I accept all to please Thee : in like manner I accept of the death Thou hast decreed for me, with all the anguish and crosses which may accompany it : it is enough if Thou grantest me the grace to love Thee exceedingly. Lend me Thy assistance; give me strength henceforth to compensate, by my love, for all the bitterness I have caused Thee in past time, O only Love of my soul! O Queen of Heaven, O Mother of God, O great advocate of sinners, I trust in thee!

## I.—Hearing Holy Mass

To hear Mass with devotion it is necessary to remember that the Sacrifice of the Altar is the same as that which was offered on Calvary, with the difference that on Calvary the Blood of Jesus was really shed, but on the Altar it is shed only in a mystical manner. Had you been on Calvary, with what devotion and tenderness would you have attended that great Sacrifice . . . During the Sacrifice of the Mass the merits of the Passion of our Saviour are applied to us in a special manner.

It is, moreover, necessary to know that the Sacrifice of the Mass has been instituted for four ends :

1. To honour God;
2. To satisfy for our sins;
3. To thank God for His benefits; and
4. To obtain divine graces.

The following is a method that will enable us to hear Mass with great fruit :—

### 1.—FROM THE BEGINNING TILL AFTER THE GOSPEL.

You will offer the Sacrifice of the Mass *to honour God.* By the Oblation of the Person of Jesus Christ, God and Man, to the Eternal Father, we give to God infinite honour—we give Him greater honour than He would receive from the oblation of the lives of all men and all Angels. In the Holy Mass God is honoured as much as He deserves to be honoured.

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O my God, I adore Thy Majesty. I would wish to honour Thee as much as Thou deservest; but what honour can I, a miserable sinner, give Thee? I offer Thee the honour that Jesus renders Thee on this Altar.

O my God and my Creator, how couldst Thou choose me to honour Thee by means of the Sacrifice of Thy Son, when in past times I have so dishonoured Thee by the insults I have offered Thee! Since, then, Thou art pleased to accept this great Sacrifice, I unite my poor heart with the Heart of Jesus Christ, and in His Name I offer it to Thee in acknowledgment of Thy supreme dominion. Would that I could see Thy infinite Majesty adored and loved by all men! May the honour which I pay Thee this morning in the Holy Mass make amends for all the dishonour that men have shown Thee by their sins. My life, dear Jesus, has not honoured Thee—no, but dishonoured Thee in the sight of Heaven and earth! Have mercy on me, O my God! Do not abandon me, for I desire to amend my life. I repent with my whole heart of all the displeasure I have given Thee. I will begin now to love Thee truly. Holy Mary, pray to Jesus for me. Amen.

### II.—FROM THE GOSPEL TO THE CONSECRATION.

By the Oblation of Jesus Christ in the Mass, we offer to God a complete *satisfaction* for all the sins of men, and especially for the sins of all who are present at Mass to whom is applied the same Divine Blood by which the human race was redeemed on Calvary. Thus by each Mass more satisfaction is made to God than by any other expiatory work.

Offer the Sacrifice of the Mass *in satisfaction* for your sins and the sins of the world.

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O Lord, I detest above every evil all the offences I have offered Thee. I am sorry for them above all things, and in satisfaction for them I offer Thee Thy Son Who sacrifices Himself anew for us on the Altar, and through His merits I implore Thee to pardon me and give me holy perseverance.

O Great God, Thou art indignant against sinners and with too great reason, for they repay Thee with ingratitude for all that great love Thou hast shown them. But if the sins of the world are great, greater is the offering and the gift which I present to Thee in the Mass. *But not as the offence so also the gift.* I offer Thee this morning the Sacrifice of Thine own Son. May this Victim, so dear to Thee, appease Thee, and move Thee to have pity on all poor sinners who either know Thee not, or if they know Thee, will not love Thee, and live deprived of Thy grace. Give them light and strength to come out of the miserable state in which they are blindly living. I pray to Thee for all, but especially for myself who have been more ungrateful than others in offending and despising Thee. For the love of Jesus Christ, pardon me, O my God—pardon all my sins, mortal and venial, all my acts of impatience, my untruths, my immortification, distractions, and negligences at Mass and in prayer. I love Thee, Infinite Goodness; I love Thee above all things, and I promise Thee to die rather than give Thee the slightest displeasure. Ah, my Jesus, Thy death, and Thy Blood are my life!

### MEMENTO OF THE LIVING.

O Lord, I recommend to Thee the Sovereign Pontiff and all prelates, confessors, preachers, and priests. Grant them zeal and the spirit of their state that they may give themselves to the salvation of souls.

I recommend to Thee my relatives and friends and enemies; the dying who are on the point of leaving this world; all the faithful who are in Thy grace. Give them, O Lord, perseverance and fervour in Thy love.

I recommend to Thee all infidels, heretics, and sinners. Give them light and strength that they may all know and love Thee.

AT THE CONSECRATION AND ELEVATION.

My Lord and my God!
O Eucharistic Heart of Jesus, have mercy upon us!
Praised be the Most Sacred Eucharistic Heart of Jesus!
Glory, love, and gratitude to the Sacred Heart of Jesus!
O Most Merciful Jesus, Lover of souls, I pray Thee, by the agony of Thy Most Sacred Heart and by the sorrows of Thy Immaculate Mother, cleanse in Thine own Blood the sinners of the whole world who are now in their agony, and are to die this day.

Soul of Christ, sanctify me!
Body of Christ, save me!
Blood of Christ, inebriate me!
Water from the Side of Christ, wash me!
Passion of Christ, strengthen me!
O Good Jesus, hear me;
Hide me within Thy Wounds;
Suffer me not to be separated from Thee;
Defend me from the malignant enemy;
Call me at the hour of my death,
And bid me come unto Thee;
That with Thy Saints I may praise Thee for all eternity!
Amen.

O Sacrament Most Holy, O Sacrament Divine, all praise and all thanksgiving be every moment Thine!

III.—FROM THE CONSECRATION TO THE COMMUNION.

By the offering of the Holy Mass we render to God an adequate *thanksgiving* for all the benefits He has bestowed upon us.

Lord, I am unable to thank Thee. I offer Thee the Blood of Jesus Christ in this Mass, and in all the Masses that are at this moment being celebrated throughout the world.

Eternal Father, I offer Thee this Sacrifice in thanksgiving for all Thy benefits to mankind, especially for those conferred on the Sacred Humanity of Jesus Christ,

on the Blessed Virgin Mary, on my Guardian Angel, and on all my Patron Saints—for all the blessings conferred upon the world, and particularly on me a poor sinner who have deserved for my ingratitude to be abandoned by Thee. I thank Thee, O infinite Goodness—rather I will say, Jesus Christ thanks Thee for me.

Enlighten me, I beseech Thee, O my God, and help me to be no longer ungrateful to Thine exceeding love. I have been so ungrateful to Thee, my Jesus! How many times, for the sake of some miserable pleasure or fancy, have I not bartered away Thy grace, and lost Thee, O God of my soul! I have been grateful enough to creatures. To Thee alone have I shown ingratitude. My dear God, pardon me. I am sorry. O my dear Jesus, my beloved Jesus, my good Jesus, hear Thou me.

### MEMENTO OF THE DEAD.

I recommend to Thee, O God, the souls of my parents, benefactors, friends, and enemies; and the souls of those who may be in Purgatory through my fault. I recommend to Thee the souls of priests, and especially those who laboured for souls; the souls of those who were most devout to the Passion of Jesus Christ, to the Most Blessed Sacrament, and to the Divine Mother; the souls most forgotten, those who are suffering the most, and those who are nearest to the Gates of Heaven. Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord, and may perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.

### IV.—FROM THE COMMUNION TO THE END.

During the Mass *we can obtain all the graces* we desire for ourselves and for others. We are of ourselves unworthy to merit any grace from God, but Jesus Christ has given us the means of obtaining all graces, if while we offer Him to God in the Mass, we ask them of

the Eternal Father in His Name, for then Jesus Himself unites with us in prayer. If you knew that while you pray to the Lord, the Divine Mother, along with all Paradise, united with you, with what confidence would you pray! Now, when you ask of God any grace during Mass, Jesus, Whose prayers are more efficacious than the prayers of all Heaven together, prays for you and offers in your behalf the merits of His Passion. Ask, therefore, with confidence, the graces of which you stand in need, particularly sorrow for your sins, the grace of perseverance, and divine love. And recommend to God poor sinners.

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O miserable being that I have been, how many graces have I lost, O my God, for having neglected to ask Thee for them in the Mass! I unite, then, O Eternal Father, my prayers with those of Jesus Christ, and for the love of Him Thy Son, hear me.

*Ecce Agnus Dei!*—I offer Thee, O my God, this spotless Lamb—the Lamb Thou didst behold one day sacrificed for Thy glory and for our salvation on the Cross.

For the love of this Victim, so dear to Thee, apply His merits to my soul and pardon me all my offences, great and small, that I may have committed against Thee.

Enlighten me, I beseech Thee, O Lord, through the merits of Jesus Christ; inflame me with Thy love, and detach me from the earth. Do Thou, my dear Saviour, make me wholly Thine before I die, and do not allow me to be ever again separated from Thee. My Jesus, Thou art my Love and my Life. Grant that every time I may behold Thee on the Altar I may say to Thee with St. Philip Neri: "Behold my Love! Behold my Love! Behold all my Love!" These are the graces which I beg of Thee—give me holy perseverance, give me Thy holy Love, I ask for nothing more. Hear me, O my Jesus, by the merits of Thy Passion. Draw me wholly to

Thyself. Give me patience and resignation in difficulties and in contradictions. Give me the spirit of mortifying myself for Thy love. Give me the true spirit of humility. Teach me to do Thy holy will.

I pray Thee also to enlighten those who know Thee not, and who are living deprived of Thy grace. Give to all the gift of Thy grace. Give to all the gift of Thy holy fear. O infinite Love of my God, make Thyself known, make Thyself loved! Eternal Father, for the love of that Son sacrificed to Thee this morning, give me holy perseverance in Thy grace and the gift of Thy holy love. I recommend to Thee again all my relatives, friends, and enemies. I recommend to Thee the souls in Purgatory, and all poor sinners.

Thy Wounds, Thy Blood, Thy Death, O Jesus, are my life. Give me holy perseverance. Grant that in all my temptations I may have recourse to Thee. Increase Thy love in me, and then do with me what Thou wilt.

O Mary, thou art the Mother of Perseverance. Thou hearest all those who pray to thee. I ask from thee and confidently hope from thee this holy perseverance. Amen.

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If you have received Holy Communion remain after Mass and thank Our Blessed Lord Who is still in your breast.

There is no prayer more agreeable to God, or more profitable to the soul, than that which is made during the Thanksgiving after Communion.

Oh, what treasures of grace would you not receive, devout soul, if you only entertained yourself with Jesus for an hour or at least half an hour after Communion!

## II.—Holy Communion

### FREQUENT AND DAILY COMMUNION.

The Sacred Congregation of the Council, in a Plenary Session held on the 16th December, 1905, determined and declared as follows :—

1. Frequent and daily Communion, as a thing most earnestly desired by Christ our Lord, and by the Catholic Church, should be open to all the faithful of whatever rank and condition of life; so that no one who is in the state of grace, and who approaches the holy table with a right and devout intention, can lawfully be hindered therefrom.

2. A *right intention* consists in this : that he who approaches the holy table should do so, not out of routine or vainglory or human respect, but for the purpose of pleasing God, of being more closely united with Him by charity, and of seeking this divine remedy for his weaknesses and defects.

3. Although it is most expedient that those who communicate frequently or daily should be free from venial sins, especially from such as are fully deliberate, and from any affection thereto, nevertheless, it is sufficient that they be free from mortal sin, with the purpose of never sinning mortally in future; and, if they have the sincere purpose, it is impossible but that daily communicants should gradually emancipate themselves from venial sins also, and from all affection thereto.

4. But whereas the Sacraments of the New Law, though they take effect *ex opere operato*, nevertheless produce a greater effect in proportion as the dispositions of the recipient are better; therefore, care is to be taken that Holy Communion be preceded by *serious preparation*, and followed by a *suitable thanksgiving*, according

to each one's strength, circumstances, and duties, etc., etc., etc.

The Decree ("Sacra Tridentina Synodus") of which the above regulations are an extract, was ratified and confirmed by His Holiness Pope Pius X., on the 17th December, 1905, and ordered to be published to the whole world.

## ACTS FOR HOLY COMMUNION.

### I.—PREPARATION FOR COMMUNION.

St. Francis de Sales says that our Saviour can never be seen more amiable and more tender in all that He has done for us, than in Holy Communion, in which He, so to say, annihilates Himself and becomes Food, that He may unite Himself to the hearts and bodies of His faithful. Therefore the learned Gerson used also to say that there was no means more efficacious than the Holy Communion whereby to enkindle devotion and the holy love of God in our souls.

And, indeed, if we speak of doing something agreeable to God, what can a soul do more agreeable to Him than to receive Communion? St. Denis teaches us that love always tends towards perfect union; but how can a soul be more perfectly united with Jesus than in the manner of which He speaks Himself, saying: *He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him.* St. Augustine says that if every day you receive this Sacrament, Jesus will be always with you, and that you will always advance in divine love.

Again, if there is question of healing our spiritual infirmities, what more certain remedy can we have than the Holy Communion, which is called by the Sacred Council of Trent "a remedy whereby we may be freed from daily faults, and be preserved from mortal sins."

Whence does it some, asks Cardinal Bona, that in so many souls we see so little fruit with such frequent

Communions, and that they constantly relapse into the same faults? He replies: "The fault is not in the food, but in the disposition of him who receives." *Can a man*, says Solomon, *hide fire in his bosom, and his garments not burn? God is a consuming fire.* He comes Himself in Holy Communion to enkindle this Divine fire; how is it, then, asks William of Paris, that we see such a diabolical miracle as that souls should remain cold in Divine love in the midst of such flames?

All comes from the want of proper dispositions, and especially from want of preparation. Fire immediately kindles dry but not green wood; for this latter is not disposed to burn. The Saints derived great benefit from their Communions because they prepared themselves with very great care. St. Aloysius Gonzaga devoted three days to his preparation for Holy Communion, and three days he spent in thanksgiving to his Lord.

To prepare well for Holy Communion, a soul should be disposed on two points: it should be detached from creatures, and have a great desire to advance in Divine love.

In the first place, then, a soul should detach itself from all things, and drive everything from its heart which is not God. *He that is washed*, saith Jesus, *needeth not but to wash his feet, but is clean wholly*; which signifies, as St. Bernard explains it, that in order to receive this Sacrament with great fruit, we should not only be cleansed from mortal sins, but that our feet also should be washed, that is, free from earthly affections; for being in contact with the earth, they excite a sort of repugnance in God, and soiling the soul, prevent the effects of Holy Communion.

St. Gertrude asked our Lord what preparation He required of her for the Holy Communion; and He replied: "I only ask that thou shouldst come empty of thyself to receive Me."

In the second place, it is very necessary in Holy Communion to have a great desire to receive Jesus Christ and His holy love. In this Sacred Banquet, says Gerson,

only those who really hunger receive their fill; and the most Blessed Virgin Mary had already said the same thing: *He hath filled the hungry with good things.* As Jesus, writes the Blessed John of Avila, only came into this world after He had been much and long desired, so does He only enter a soul which desires Him; for it is not becoming that such Food should be given to him who has no liking for it. Our Lord one day said to St. Mechtilde: "No bee flies with such impetuosity to flowers, to suck their honey, as I fly to souls in the Holy Communion, driven by the violence of My love." Since, then, Jesus Christ has so great a desire to come into our souls, it is right that we also should have a great desire to receive Him and His Divine love in the Holy Communion. St. Francis de Sales teaches us that the principal object a soul should have in view when communicating should be, to advance in the love of God; since He, Who for love alone gives Himself to us, should be received for love.

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### ACTS BEFORE COMMUNION.

1. ACT OF FAITH.—*Behold he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills.* Ah, my most amiable Saviour, over how many, and what rough, craggy mountains hast Thou not had to pass in order to come and unite Thyself to me by the means of this Most Holy Sacrament! Thou, from being God, hadst to become Man; from being immense, to become a Babe; from being Lord, to become a Servant. Thou hadst to pass from the bosom of Thy Eternal Father to the womb of a Virgin; from Heaven into a stable; from a throne of glory to the gibbet of a criminal. And now this very morning Thou wilt come from Thy seat in Heaven to dwell in my bosom.

*Behold he standeth behind our wall, looking through the windows, looking through the lattices.* Behold,

O my soul, thy loving Jesus, burning with the same love with which He loved thee when dying for thee on the Cross, is now concealed in the Most Blessed Sacrament under the sacred species; and what is He doing? *Looking through the lattices.* As an ardent lover, desirous to see His love corresponded with, from the Host, as from within the closed lattices, whence He sees without being seen, He is looking at you, who are this morning about to feed upon His Divine Flesh; He observes your thoughts, what it is that you love, what you desire, what you seek for, and what offerings you are about to make Him.

Awake, then, my soul, and prepare to receive thy Jesus; and, in the first place, by Faith, say to Him: So then, my beloved Redeemer, in a few moments Thou art coming to me? O hidden God, unknown to the greater part of men, I believe in Thee and adore Thee in the Most Holy Sacrament as my Lord and Saviour! And in acknowledgment of this truth I would willingly lay down my life. Thou comest to enrich me with Thy graces and unite Thyself all to me; how great, then, should be my confidence in this Thy so loving visit!

2. Act of Confidence.—My soul, expand thy heart. Thy Jesus can do Thee every good, and, indeed, loves thee. Hope thou for great things from this thy Lord, Who, urged by love, comes all love to thee. Yes, my dear Jesus, my Hope, I trust in Thy goodness, that, in giving Thyself to me this morning, Thou wilt enkindle in my poor heart the beautiful flame of Thy pure love, and a real desire to please Thee; so that, from this day forward, I may never will anything but what Thou willest.

3. Act of Love.—Ah, my God, my God, true and only Love of my soul, and what more couldst Thou have done to be loved by me? To die for me was not enough for Thee, my Lord; Thou wast pleased to institute this great Sacrament in order to give Thyself all to me, and thus bind and unite Thyself heart to heart with so

loathsome and ungrateful a creature as I am. And what is more, Thou Thyself invitest me to receive Thee, and desirest so much that I should do so! O boundless love! incomprehensible love! infinite love! a God would give Himself all to me!

My soul, believest thou this? And what doest thou? What sayest thou? O God, O God, O infinite amiability, only worthy object of all love, I love Thee with my whole heart, I love Thee above all things, I love Thee more than myself, more than my life! Oh, could I but see Thee loved by all! Oh, could I but cause Thee to be loved by all hearts as much as Thou deservest! I love Thee, O most amiable God, and I unite my miserable heart in loving Thee to the hearts of the Seraphim, to the heart of the most blessed Virgin Mary, to the Heart of Jesus, Thy most loving and beloved Son. So that, O Infinite Good, I love Thee with the love with which the Saints, with which Mary, with which Jesus loves Thee. And I love Thee only because Thou art worthy of it, and to give Thee pleasure. Depart, all ye earthly affections, which are not for God, depart from my heart. Mother of fair love, most holy Virgin Mary, help me to love that God Whom Thou dost so ardently desire to see loved!

4. Act of Humility.—Then, my soul, thou art even now about to feed on the most sacred Flesh of Jesus! And art thou worthy? My God, and who am I, and who art Thou? I indeed know and confess Who Thou art Who givest Thyself to me; but dost Thou know what I am who am about to receive Thee?

And is it possible, O my Jesus, that Thou Who art infinite purity desirest to come and reside in this soul of mine, which has been so many times the dwelling of Thy enemy, and soiled with so many sins? I know, O my Lord, Thy great Majesty and my misery; I am ashamed to appear before Thee. Reverence would induce me to keep at a distance from Thee; but if I depart from Thee, O my Life, whither shall I go? To whom shall I have recourse? And what will become of me? No, never

will I depart from Thee; nay, even I will ever draw nearer and nearer to Thee. Thou art satisfied that I should receive Thee as Food, Thou even invitest me to this. I come, then, O my amiable Saviour, I come to receive Thee this morning, all humbled and confused at the sight of my defects; but full of confidence in Thy tender mercy, and in the love which Thou bearest me.

5. Act of Contrition.—I am indeed grieved, O God of my soul, for not having loved Thee during the time past; still worse, so far from loving Thee, to gratify my own inclinations I have greatly offended and outraged Thy infinite goodness: I have turned my back upon Thee, I have despised Thy grace and friendship; in fine, O my God, I was willing and ready to lose Thee. Lord, I am sorry, and grieve for it with my whole heart. I detest the sins which I have committed, be they great or small, as the greatest of all my misfortunes, because I have thereby offended Thee, O Infinite Goodness. I trust that Thou hast already forgiven me; but if Thou hast not yet pardoned me, oh, do so before I receive Thee: wash with Thy Blood this soul of mine, in which Thou art so soon about to dwell.

6. Act of Desire.—And now, my soul, the blessed hour has arrived in which Jesus will come and take up His dwelling in thy poor heart. Behold the King of Heaven, behold thy Redeemer and God, Who is even now coming; prepare thyself to receive Him with love, invite Him with all the ardour of thy desire. Come, O my Jesus, come to my soul, whic desires Thee. Before Thou givest Thyself to me, I desire to give Thee, and I now give Thee, my miserable heart; do Thou accept it, and come quickly to take possession of it.

Come, my God! hasten; delay no longer. My only and Infinite Good, my Treasure, my Life, my Paradise, my Love, my All, my wish is to receive Thee with the love with which the most holy and loving souls have received Thee; with that with which the most Blessed Virgin

Mary received Thee; with their Communions I unite this my Communion.

Most Holy Virgin and my Mother Mary, behold, I already approach to receive thy Son. Would that I had the heart and love with which thou didst communicate! Give me this morning thy Jesus, as thou didst give Him to the shepherds and to the kings. I intend to receive Him from thy most pure hands. Tell Him that I am thy servant and thy client; for He will thus look upon me with a more loving eye, and, now that He is coming, will press me more closely to Himself.

### II.—THANKSGIVING AFTER COMMUNION.

There is no prayer more agreeable to God, or more profitable to the soul, than that which is made during the Thanksgiving after Communion. It is the opinion of many grave writers (Suarez, Gaetano, Valenza, De Lugo, and others), that Holy Communion, so long as the sacramental species lasts, constantly produces greater and greater graces in the soul, provided the soul is then constant in disposing itself by new acts of virtue. The Council of Florence, in the Decree of Eugenius IV to the Armenians, teaches that the Blessed Sacrament produces the same effect in the soul as material food in the body, which, when it is eaten, takes effect according to the state in which it finds the body.

For this reason, holy souls endeavour to remain as long as possible in prayer after Communion. The Blessed John of Avila, even when he was giving his missions, used to remain for at least two hours in prayer. Father Balthasar Alvarez used to say that we should make great account of the time after Communion, imagining that we hear from the lips of Jesus Christ Himself the words which He addressed to His disciples: *But me you have not always with you.*

It is not advisable, as many do, to begin to read immediately after Communion; it is then better to spend at

least a short time in producing holy affections, and in conversing with Jesus Who is then within us, and in repeating many times words of tenderness, or some loving prayer. Jesus Christ said the same prayer in the Garden three times over : *And he prayed the third time, saying the self-same word.* In affections and prayers it is, then, that the soul should entertain itself with Jesus after Communion; for we must know that the acts formed in prayer after Communion are far more precious and meritorious in the sight of God than when made at another time; for the soul being then united with Jesus, the value of the acts is increased by the presence of Jesus. We should, moreover, know that after Communion Jesus Christ is more disposed to grant graces. St. Teresa says that after Communion Jesus places Himself in the soul as on a throne of grace, and then says : *What willest thou that I should do for thee?*—meaning : O soul, I am come for the express purpose of granting thee graces; ask Me what thou wilt, and as much as thou willest, thou shalt receive all.

Oh, what treasures of grace would you receive, devout soul, if you only entertained yourself with Jesus for an hour, or at least half an hour, after Communion! For this purpose you can read the following acts. Be also careful after your prayer is ended, to keep yourself during the whole day on which you have communicated united by affections and prayers with Jesus, Whom you have received.

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### ACTS AFTER COMMUNION.

1. Act of Faith.—Behold, my God is even now come to visit me; my Saviour to dwell in my soul. My Jesus is even now within me. He is come to make Himself mine, and at the same time to make me His. So that Jesus is mine and I belong to Jesus; Jesus is all mine, and I am all His.

O Infinite Goodness! O Infinite Mercy! O Infinite Love! that a God should come to unite Himself to me, and to make Himself all mine! My soul, now that thou art thus closely bound to Jesus, that thou art thus one with Him, what doest thou? Hast thou nothing to say to Him? Dost thou not converse with thy God Who is within thee? Ah, yes, renew thy Faith; remember that the Angels now surround thee adoring their God, Who is within thy breast; do thou also adore thy Lord within thyself. Enter into thyself, and banish thence every other thought. Unite all thy affections together, and, clinging closely to God, say:

2. An Act of Welcome.—Ah, my Jesus, my Love, my Infinite Good, my All, be ever welcome in the poor dwelling of my soul! Ah, my Lord, where art Thou? To what a place art Thou come? Thou hast entered my heart, which is far worse than the stable in which Thou wast born; it is full of earthly affections, of self-love, and of inordinate desires. And how couldst Thou come to dwell there? I would address Thee with St. Peter: *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man.* Yes, depart from me, O Lord, for I am indeed unworthy to receive a God of infinite goodness; go and find repose in those pure souls who serve Thee with so much love. But no, my Redeemer; what do I say? Leave me not! for if Thou departest, I am lost. I embrace Thee, my Life; I cling to Thee. Mad indeed have I been in having separated myself from Thee for the love of creatures; and in my ingratitude I drove Thee from me. But now I will never more separate myself from Thee, my Treasure; I desire to live and die ever united to Thee. Most Blessed Virgin Mary, ye Seraphim and blessed souls, who love God with pure love, lend me your affections, that I may worthily attend on my beloved Lord.

3. Act of Thanksgiving.—My God and Lord, I thank Thee for the grace which Thou hast this morning

bestowed upon me, of coming to dwell in my soul; but I would wish to thank Thee in a manner worthy of Thee and of the great favour which Thou hast done me. But what do I say? How can such a miserable creature as I am ever worthily thank Thee?

Father Segneri says that the feeling most becoming a soul who communicates is that of wondering astonishment at the thought, and to repeat: "A God is united to me; a God is mine!" David said: *What shall I render to the Lord for all the things that he hath rendered to me?* But I! What return shall I make to Thee, my Jesus, Who, after having given me so many other good things, hast this morning, moreover, given me Thyself? My soul, bless and thank thy God, then, as best thou canst. And thou, my Mother Mary, my holy advocates, my Guardian Angel, and all ye souls who love God,—*Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what great things he hath done for my soul.*—Come and bless and thank my God for me, admiring and praising the indeed great graces which He has granted me.

4. Act of Oblation.—*My beloved to me, and I to him.* Should a king go to visit a poor shepherd in his hut, what could the shepherd offer him other than his whole hut, such as it is? Since, then, O Jesus, my Divine King, Thou hast come to visit the poor house of my soul, I offer and give Thee this house and my entire self, together with my liberty and will: *My beloved to me, and I to him.* Thou hast given Thyself all to me; I give myself all to Thee. My Jesus, from this day forward I will be no longer mine; I will be Thine, and all Thine. May my senses be Thine, that they may serve me only to please Thee. And what greater pleasure, says St. Peter of Alcantara, can be found than that of pleasing Thee, most amiable, most loving, most gracious God? I at the same time give Thee all the powers of my soul, and I will that they shall be all Thine; my memory I will use only to recall to mind Thy benefits and Thy love; my understanding I will use only to think

of Thee, Who always thinkest of my good; my will I will use only to love Thee, my God, my All, and to will only that which Thou willest. My most sweet Lord, I offer, then, and consecrate to Thee this morning, all that I am and have—my senses, my thoughts, my affections, my desires, my pleasures, my inclinations, my liberty; in a word, I place my whole body and soul in Thy hands.

Accept, O Infinite Majesty, the sacrifice of the hitherto most ungrateful sinner Thou hast ever had on earth; but who now offers and gives himself all to Thee. Do with me, and dispose of me, O Lord, as Thou pleasest.

Come, O consuming Fire, O Divine Love! and consume in me all which is mine, and which is displeasing in Thy most pure eyes, so that henceforward I may be all Thine, and may live only to execute, not Thy commands and counsels alone, but all Thy holy desires and good pleasure as well. Amen.

O most holy Mary, do thou present this offering of mine to the Most Blessed Trinity with thine own hands; and do thou obtain their acceptance of it, and that They may grant me the grace to be faithful unto death. Amen, Amen, Amen.

5. Act of Petition.—O my soul, what art thou doing? This is not a time to be wasted; it is a precious time, in which thou canst receive from God all the graces thou askest. Seest thou not the Eternal Father, Who is lovingly beholding thee? For within thee He sees His beloved Son, the dearest object of His love. Drive, then, far from thee all other thoughts; re-enkindle thy Faith, enlarge thy heart, and ask for whatever thou willest.

Hearest thou not Jesus Himself Who thus addresses thee: *What wilt thou that I should do to thee?* O soul, tell me, what dost thou desire of Me? I am come for the express purpose of enriching and gratifying thee; ask with confidence, and thou wilt receive all.

Ah, my most sweet Saviour, since Thou hast come into my heart in order to grant me graces, and desirest that I should ask Thee for them, I ask Thee not for the goods of the earth—riches, honours, or pleasure, but grant me, I beseech thee, intense sorrow for the displeasure I have caused Thee; impart to me so clear a light that I may know the vanity of this world, and how deserving Thou art of love. Change this heart of mine, detach it from all earthly affections; give me a heart conformable in all things to Thy holy will, that it may seek only for that which is most pleasing to Thee, and have no other desire than Thy holy love : *Create a clean heart in me, O God.*

I deserve not this; but Thou, my Jesus, deservest it for me, since Thou art come to dwell in my soul : I ask it of Thee through Thy merits, and those of Thy most holy Mother, and by the love which Thou bearest to Thy Eternal Father.

℣.

Here pause to ask Jesus for some other particular grace for yourself and for your neighbours. Do not forget poor sinners, or the Souls in Purgatory; and pray also for me, who composed this little book for your good.

Eternal Father, Jesus Christ Himself Thy Son has said : *Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you.* For the love, then, of this Son, Whom I now hold within my breast, do Thou graciously hear me and grant my petition.

Jesus and Mary, my sweetest Loves, may I suffer for you, may I die for you; may I be all yours, and in nothing my own ! May the Most Blessed Sacrament ever be thanked and praised ! Blessed be the holy and Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary !

*EN EGO.*

A Plenary Indulgence, applicable to the Souls in Purgatory is annexed to this prayer, when recited before a representation of Christ Crucified, after Communion,

Behold, O good and most sweet Jesus, I cast myself upon my knees in Thy sight, and with the most fervent desire of my soul I pray and beseech Thee that Thou wouldst impress upon my heart lively sentiments of Faith, Hope, and Charity, with true repentance for my sins, and a firm purpose of amendment, whilst with all the affection of my heart and grief of soul I ponder within myself, and mentally contemplate Thy Five most Precious Wounds; having before my eyes what the Prophet David put in Thy mouth concerning Thee, O good Jesus: *They have dug my hands and my feet; they have numbered all my bones*—(Ps. xxi. 17).

(Say five *Paters*, *Aves*, and *Glorias* for the Pope's intentions in order to gain all the Indulgences you can).

### *ANIMA CHRISTI.*

Soul of Christ, sanctify me!
Body of Christ, protect me!
Blood of Christ, inebriate me!
Water of the Side of Christ, purify me!
Passion of Christ, strengthen me!
O good Jesus, hear Thou me;
Within Thy Wounds, oh, hide me;
Suffer me not to leave Thee;
From the evil one defend me;
In my last hour call Thou me;
Bid me, oh, bid me, come to Thee;
With Saints and Angels may I praise Thee
Through endless ages of eternity. Amen.

(Indulgence of 7 years when said after Communion).

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### Petitions to Jesus Christ Received in Holy Communion.

O my Jesus, now that Thou, Who art true Life, art come to me, make me die to the world, to live only to Thee, my Redeemer. By the flames of Thy love destroy

in me all that is displeasing to Thee, and give me a true desire to gratify and please Thee in all things.

Give me that true humility which will make me love contempt and self-abjection, and take from me all ambition of putting myself forward.

Give me the spirit of mortification, that I may deny myself all those things that do not tend to Thy love, and may lovingly embrace that which is displeasing to the senses and to self-love.

Give me perfect resignation to Thy will, that I may accept in peace, pains, infirmities, loss of friends or property, desolation, persecution, and all that comes to me from Thy hand. I offer myself all to Thee, that Thou mayest dispose of me according to Thy pleasure. And give me grace always to repeat this entire offering of myself, especially at the time of my death. May I, then, so sacrifice my life to Thee, with all my affection in union with the sacrifice that Thou didst make of Thy life for me to the Eternal Father. My Jesus, enlighten me, and make me know Thy goodness, and the obligation to love Thee above all things, for the love Thou hast borne me in dying for me, and in leaving Thyself in the Most Holy Sacrament.

I pray Thee to give Thy light to all infidels who know Thee not, to all heretics who are out of the Church, and to all sinners who live deprived of Thy grace. My Jesus, make Thyself known, make Thyself loved. I recommend to Thee all the Souls in Purgatory, and especially N.N.; alleviate the pains they suffer, and shorten the time of their banishment from Thy sight; do this through Thy merits, and those of Thy most holy Mother and all the Saints.

My God, enkindle the flame of Thy love within me, so that I may seek nothing but Thy pleasure; that nothing may please me but pleasing Thee. I drive from my heart everything which is not agreeable to Thee. May I always be able to say with real affection: O God, my God, I wish for Thee alone, and nothing more. My Jesus, give me a great love for Thy most sacred Passion,

that Thy sufferings and Death may be ever before my eyes to excite me to love Thee always, and to make me desire to give Thee some grateful compensation for Thy so great love. Give me also a great love for the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, in which Thou hast made known the exceeding tenderness Thou hast for us. I also beg of Thee to give me a tender devotion to Thy most holy Mother : give me grace always to love her and serve her, always to have recourse to her intercession, and to induce others to honour her and confide in her patronage; and grant to me and to all men ever to have a great confidence, first in the merits of Thy Passion, and then in the intercession of Mary.

I pray Thee grant me a happy death. Grant that I may then receive Thee with great love in the most holy Viaticum, that in Thy embrace, burning with a holy fire, and a great desire of seeing Thee, I may quit this life to throw myself at Thy feet the first time it shall be my lot to see Thee.

Above all, I pray Thee, O my Jesus, to give me the grace of prayer, that I may recommend myself always to Thee and Thy most holy Mother, espcially in time of temptation; and I pray Thee, by Thy merits, to grant me holy Perseverance and Thy holy love.

Bless me, O Jesus, and bless me altogether—my soul, my body, my senses, and my faculties. Bless especially my tongue, that it may only speak for Thy glory. Bless my eyes, that they may not look at anything that may tempt me to displease Thee. Bless my taste, that it may not offend Thee by intemperance; and bless all the members of my body, that they may all serve Thee and not offend Thee. Bless my memory, that it may always remember Thy love and the favours Thou hast accorded me. Bless my understanding, that it may know Thy goodness, and the obligation I have of loving Thee; and that it may see all that I must avoid, and all that I must do to conform myself to Thy holy will. Above all, bless my will, that it may seek for nothing but Thee, the infinite Good; that it may seek for nothing but

to please Thee and may take delight in nothing but what conduces to Thy glory.

O my King, come Thou and reign alone in my soul; take entire possession of it, that it may neither serve nor obey anything but Thy love.

O that I might spend myself all for Thee, my Jesus, Who hast spent all Thy life for me!

O Lamb of God, sacrificed on the Cross, remember that I am one of those souls which Thou hast redeemed with so much labour and sorrow. Never let me lose Thee again. Thou hast given Thyself all to me; make me all Thine own, and let my only wish be to please Thee. I love Thee, O immense Good, in order to give Thee pleasure. I love Thee, because Thou art worthy of my love. I have no greater grief than that of thinking that I have been so long in the world without loving Thee.

My beloved Redeemer, give me a portion of that grief which Thou didst feel for my sins in the garden of Gethsemani. O my Jesus, would that I had died and never offended Thee: O love of my Jesus, Thou art my love and my hope! I would rather lose my life, and a thousand lives than lose Thy grace.

My God, if I were to die in sin, I could no more love Thee. I thank Thee that Thou givest me time, and dost call me to love Thee. Now, then, that I can love Thee, I will love Thee with all my soul. Thou hast borne with me so long that I might love Thee. Yes, and I will love Thee. Ah, by the precious Blood Thou hast shed for me, suffer me not to betray Thee again. *In thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me not be confounded forever.* What is the world? What are riches? What are pleasures? What are honours? God! God! I wish for God alone! My God, Thou art sufficient for me; Thou art an infinite Good.

O my Jesus, bind me wholly to Thy love, and draw all my affections to Thyself, that I may love none other but Thee. Make me all Thine before I die.

Ah, my God, as long as I live I stand in danger of

losing Thee. When shall the day come that I can say: My Jesus, I can no longer lose Thee?

O Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus Christ, despise me not; suffer me to love Thee, and give me Thy holy love. I wish to love Thee greatly in this life, that I may love Thee greatly in the next

O infinite Good, I love Thee; but do Thou make me know the great good that I love, and give me the love Thou dost desire to see in me. Enable me to conquer all things to please Thee. Amen.

### Prayer of St. Bonaventure to the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Wound, O my most tender Jesus, the inmost of my soul with the sweet dart of Thy love, that through Thy love and the desire of possessing Thee, my soul may languish and melt within me, and so long to quit this life, to come and unite itself perfectly with Thee in a happy eternity. Make my soul always hunger after Thee, the Bread of Angels, my Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. May it ever thirst after Thee, O Fountain of life and light! May it ever desire Thee, seek Thee, speak to Thee alone, find Thee, and do all things to Thy praise and glory to the end! Thou, my Redeemer, art my only hope, my riches, my consolation, my peace, my refuge, my wisdom, my portion, and my treasure. On Thee may my heart and my mind be ever fixed! Amen.

## PRAYERS TO CHRIST THE KING.

### Act of Consecration of the Human Race to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

(Ordered by Our Holy Father, Pius XI, to be recited each year on the Feast of the Kingship of our Lord Jesus Christ).

Most sweet Jesus, Redeemer of the human race, look down upon us humbly prostrate before Thy altar. We are Thine, and Thine we wish to be; but to be more securely united to Thee, behold each one of us freely consecrates himself to-day to Thy most Sacred Heart. Many, indeed, have never known Thee; many, too, despising Thy precepts, have rejected Thee. Have mercy on them all, most merciful Jesus, and draw them to Thy Sacred Heart. Be Thou King, O Lord, not only of the faithful who have never forsaken Thee, but also of the prodigal children who have abandoned Thee; grant that they may quickly return to their Father's house, lest they die of wretchedness and hunger. Be Thou King of those who are deceived by erroneous opinions or whom discord keeps aloof, and call them back to the harbour of truth and to unity of Faith, so that soon there may be but one flock and one Shepherd. Be Thou King of all those who are still involved in the darkness of idolatry or of Islamism, and refuse not to draw them all into the light and Kingdom of God. Turn Thine eyes of mercy towards the children of that race, once Thy chosen people. Of old, they called down upon themselves the Blood of the Saviour; may it now descend upon them, a laver of Redemption and of life. Grant, O Lord, to Thy Church assurance of freedom and immunity from harm; give peace and order to all nations, and make the earth resound from pole to pole with one cry: Praise to the Divine Heart that wrought our salvation; to It be glory and honour for ever. Amen.

### PRAYER TO CHRIST THE KING OF ALL.

O Christ Jesus, I acknowledge Thee as the King of all. Whatsoever has been made, has been created for Thee. Exercise Thy rights over me.

I renew my Baptismal vows, renouncing Satan with all his works and pomps, and promising to live as a good Christian. I pledge myself especially to promote, as far

as in me lies, the triumph of God's rights and those of Thy Church.

Divine Heart of Jesus, I offer Thee my feeble help to make all hearts recognise Thy Sacred Kingship, and thus to establish the reign of Thy Peace throughout the world. Amen.

(His Holiness Pope Pius XI grants a Plenary Indulgence once a day on the usual conditions to all who recite the above prayer).

### Prayer to the Most Holy Mary

TO OBTAIN THE LOVE OF JESUS AND LOVE TOWARDS HER.

O Mary, thou dost so much desire to see this thy Son Jesus loved; if thou lovest me, this is the grace I ask of thee, and which thou must procure for me: obtain for me a great love for Jesus Christ, and not to love any other than Him. Thou obtainest from Him all that thou dost wish; listen to me, then, pray for me and comfort me; bind me in such a manner to Jesus that I shall no longer be able to leave off loving Him. Obtain for me also a great love towards thee, who art of all creatures the most loving, the most lovely, and the most loved by God. I rely greatly on thy compassion, and I love thee, my Lady; but I love thee only a little: ask thy God to give me a greater love; for to love thee is a grace God grants only to those whom thou dost wish to be saved. Live Jesus our Love, and Mary our hope!

### Prayer to the Mother of Perpetual Succour.

O Mother of Perpetual Succour, thou art the dispenser of all the graces which God bestows upon us wretched creatures; and for this end has He made thee so powerful, so rich, so kind, in order that thou mayest succour us in our miseries. Thou art the advocate of the most miserable and abandoned criminals who have recourse to thee.

Help me, then, who recommend myself to thee. I place my eternal salvation in thy hands; to thee I consign my soul. Number me amongst thy more special servants, take me under thy protection and I am satisfied; yes, for if thou helpest me, I fear nothing; neither my sins, since thou wilt obtain for me the pardon of them; nor the devils, for thou art more powerful than all hell; nor even Jesus, my very Judge, because by one prayer of thine He will be appeased. My only fear is that through my own negligence, I should cease to recommend myself to thee, and should thus be lost. Obtain for me, my Lady, the pardon of my sins, the love of Jesus, final perseverance, and the grace of ever having recourse to thee, O Mother of Perpetual Succour.

## III.—Visit to the Most Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin Mary

*The following devout Acts to be made at the Visit.*

When the Visit is made publicly with the congregation, the priest should read these Acts with a loud voice, and sentence by sentence, so that the people may repeat them after him.

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Renew, my soul, thy faith and confidence. Thou art now in the presence of the infinite Majesty of thy God, Who was once pleased, for thy love, to come down from Heaven and become Man on earth, and to die on a Cross to save thee; and is now in the Most Blessed Sacrament, all love, to listen to and grant thee the graces thou askest of Him. Speak to Him, then, and say:

### ACT OF FAITH AND ADORATION.

My God, I believe all that the Holy Church teaches me to believe, because Thou, Who art infallible truth, hast

revealed it. I believe that Thou art the Creator and Lord of Heaven and earth, Who eternally rewardest the just in Paradise, and chastisest sinners in hell. I believe that Thou art One in Essence, but Three in Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. I believe, O Eternal Son of God, that Thou didst take flesh, and didst become Man in the womb of Mary, and that Thou didst die on a Cross for our salvation, and that Thou art now present in the Most Blessed Sacrament, to feed us with Thy Most Sacred Flesh in the Holy Communion, and to hear and grant our prayers when we come to visit Thee on the Altar. Prostrate, then, at Thy feet, I, a miserable sinner, unworthy to appear before Thee, only fit for hell, which I have so often deserved, adore Thee, O Infinite Majesty, and unite my adoration to that which all the Angels and Saints of Heaven, together with the most holy Virgin Mary, now offer Thee.

### ACT OF HOPE.

My dear Redeemer, relying on Thy promises, and because Thou art faithful, powerful, and merciful, I hope, through the merits of Thy Passion, for the forgiveness of my sins, perseverance until death in Thy grace; and at length I hope, by Thy mercy, to see Thee and love Thee eternally in Heaven.

### ACT OF LOVE.

My own dear God, because Thou art an infinite Good, and worthy of infinite love, I love Thee with my whole heart, and above all things; and I desire to see Thee loved by all men on earth as much as Thou deservest. I rejoice that Thou art and wilt be infinitely happy for all eternity.

### ACT OF CONTRITION, AND PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT.

My beloved Redeemer, had I for Thy sake abandoned all, had I spent my entire life in a desert, and at length

died of torments endured for love of Thee, it would still have been nothing, when compared with the cruel death which Thou, my God, wast pleased to endure for love of me. But what has my conduct towards Thee been hitherto? I have repaid Thee with ingratitude; instead of loving Thee, I have so often offended Thee. I have turned my back upon Thee, and ungratefully despised Thy grace and Thy love. I am sorry, my Jesus, and from the bottom of my heart am grieved for having offended Thee, O Infinite Goodness! Oh, that I had rather died, and thus never displeased Thee! I hate and detest above every other evil all the injuries I have committed against Thee. My Lord, I promise Thee, and now determine rather to die than ever more offend Thee; I also purpose to receive the holy Sacraments during my life and at my death. I am resolved, O Infinite Majesty, to spend the whole remainder of my life, be it long or short, in loving Thee, my only Good, Who art amiable above every other good. But, O God of my soul, what will be the use of all my promises, if Thou dost not help me? Without Thy aid I shall again betray Thee worse than ever. I ask Thee, then, for this grace, and I hope for it through the merits of Thy Passion; give me holy perseverance, and never again permit me to separate myself from Thee. Grant that I may rather die than again have the misfortune to incur Thy displeasure.

### ACT OF THANKSGIVING.

My Jesus, I thank Thee for all the graces Thou hast granted me, for having redeemed me with Thy precious Blood, and for having made me a Christian by the Sacrament of Baptism; for having borne with me for so long a time when I was at enmity with Thee. Unfortunate, indeed, would my lot have been, had I then died; I should now have been in hell; there, O my God, I should now be forever lost, and unable to love Thee. I thank Thee, then, for having awaited me with so much patience,

and for having, as I trust, pardoned me with so much mercy. I thank Thee especially for dwelling in the Most Blessed Sacrament, and for having given me Thy entire Self as my Food so many times in Holy Communion, and for now admitting me to Thy Presence. I thank Thee for all; and I hope to thank Thee in a still more becoming manner for all eternity in Heaven, where I hope to sing Thy mercies for ever.

### ACT OF OFFERING.

My Jesus, for love of me Thou wast pleased to die a shameful and cruel death on an infamous gibbet; what return can I make to Thee for so great love? I can make no other than the offering of my entire self. Yes, my Lord, I offer and consecrate my whole self to Thee. I give Thee my soul, my body, and my will, resigning myself in all and forever to Thy most holy will. Do with me what Thou pleasest. Make me ever love Thee in this life and in the next; do this, and then dispose of me and of everything I have as Thou wilt. Tell me what Thou askest of me; for with Thy grace I will execute it, be it what it may.

### PRAYER.

I recommend to Thee, O Lord, the Sovereign Pontiff, and all bishops and priests; grant them the spirit of their state, so that they may sanctify the world. I recommend to Thee infidels, heretics, and all sinners; grant them light and strength to renounce sin, that they may live only to love Thee, the Sovereign Good. I recommend to Thee my relations, benefactors, and friends, and all who are in their last agony. I also recommend my enemies to Thee in an especial manner, because such is Thy command: make them happy and saints. I recommend the Holy Souls in Purgatory to

Thee; relieve them in their sufferings, and shorten the time of their exile, that they may soon go to enjoy Thee in Heaven.

And now, O Jesus hidden in the Most Blessed Sacrament, I pray to Thee for myself; from the throne of love on which Thou art on this altar, grant me by Thy merits great sorrow for my sins, and the forgiveness of all the offences which I have committed against Thee. Grant me holy humility and meekness, that I may bear all insults and persecutions with patience. Grant me the grace to mortify myself in all that is displeasing to Thee. Grant me perfect resignation to Thy holy will, so that I may with interior peace embrace all crosses which come to me from Thy hands. Grant me light to know, and strength to execute Thy holy will. Grant me great confidence in Thy most holy Passion, and in the patronage of Thy most holy Mother Mary. Grant me the supreme gift of Thy holy love, together with a great desire to love and please Thee; so that from henceforward I may always repeat the words which I now address to Thee: "My God, Thee alone do I desire, and nothing more." Grant me perseverance until death in Thy love, so that I may never again have the misfortune to lose Thy holy grace. Above all, I beseech Thee to help me always to seek for this holy perseverance from Thee, by always recommending myself to Thee and to Thy holy Mother, more especially when I am tempted to offend Thee, saying: "Jesus and Mary, Jesus and Mary, help me!" Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus, Thy Son, grant me all these graces.

*A Spiritual Communion here follows for which an Indulgence of 60 days is granted by the Church:—*

### An Act of Spiritual Communion.

My Jesus, I believe that Thou art truly present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love Thee above all things, and I desire to possess Thee within my soul. Since I am

unable now to receive Thee *sacramentally*, come at least *spiritually* into my heart. I embrace Thee as already there, and unite myself wholly to Thee; never permit me to be separated from Thee.

### Visit to the Blessed Virgin.

Most holy Immaculate Virgin and my Mother Mary, to thee, who art the Mother of my Lord, and Queen of the world, the advocate, the hope, the refuge of sinners, I have recourse to-day—I who am the most miserable of all. I render thee my most humble homage, O great Queen, and I thank thee for all the graces thou hast conferred on me until now, particularly for having delivered me from hell, which I have so often deserved. I love thee, O most amiable Lady; and for the love which I bear thee, I promise to serve thee always, and to do all in my power to make others love thee also. I place in thee all my hopes; I confide my salvation to thy care. Accept me for thy servant, and receive me under thy mantle, O Mother of Mercy. And since thou art so powerful with God, deliver me from all temptations, or rather obtain for me the strength to triumph over them until death. Of thee I ask the perfect love of Jesus Christ. From thee I hope to die a good death. O my Mother, for the love which thou bearest to God, I beseech thee to help me at all times, but especially in the last moment of my life. Leave me not, I beseech thee, until thou seest me safe in Heaven, blessing thee, and singing thy mercies for all eternity.

Amen. So I hope. So may it be.

(Indulgence of 300 days for above Prayer).

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